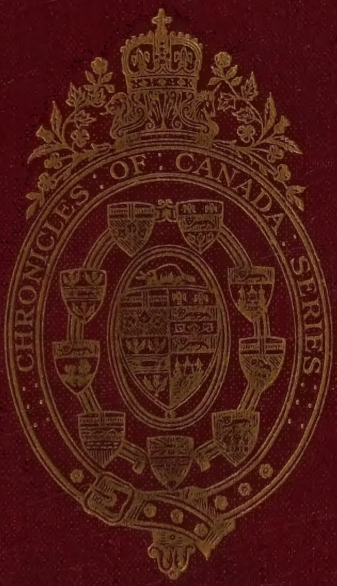

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In thirty-two volumes

14

THE WAR WITH THE UNITED STATES

BY WILLIAM WOOD

Part IV

'he Beginnings of British Canada

SIR ISAAC BROCK

From a miniature in possession of Miss Sara Mickle, Toronto

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THE WAR WITH THE UNITED STATES

A Chronicle of *1812*

BY

WILLIAM WOOD

TORONTO
GLASGOW, BROOK & COMPANY
1920

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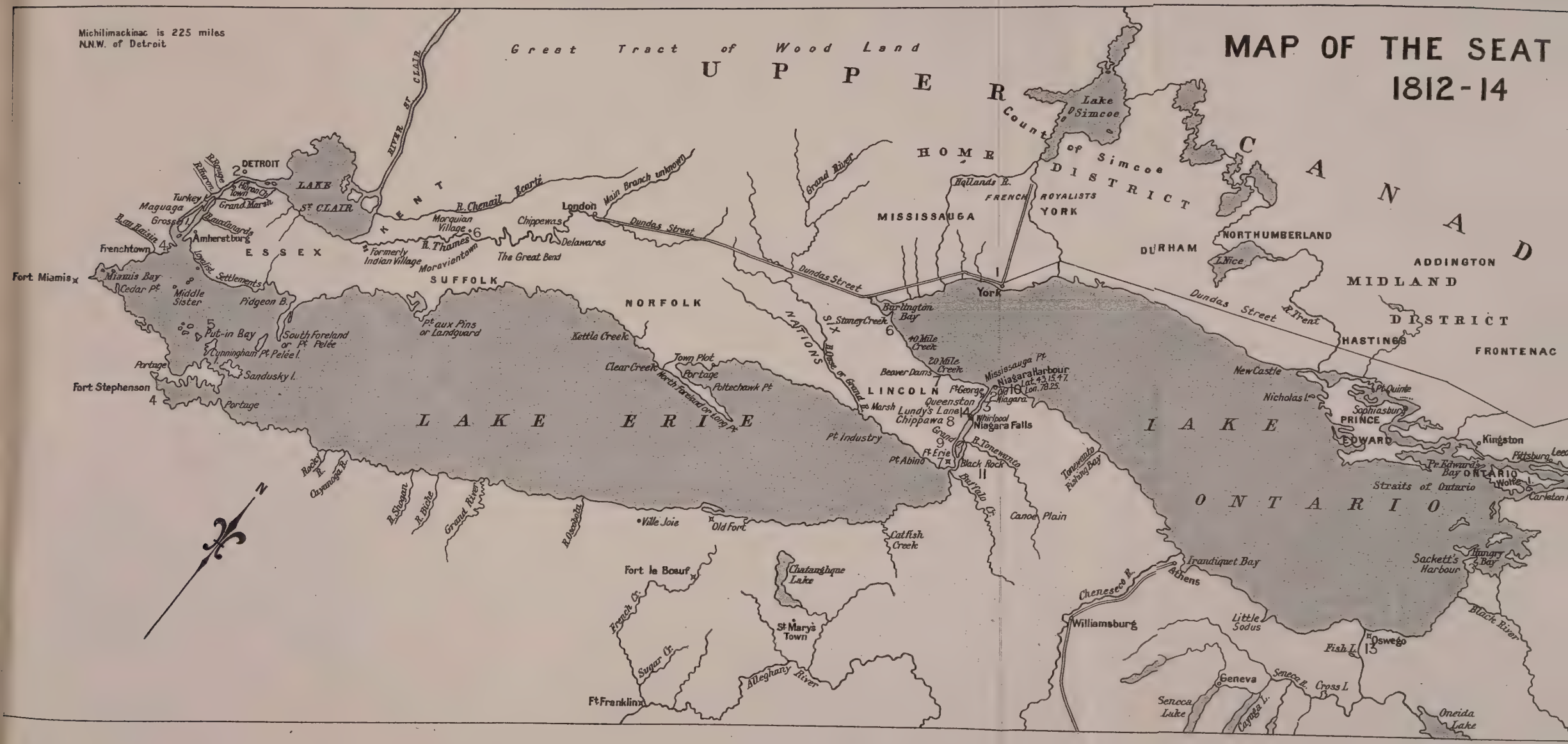

MAP OF THE SEAT
1812-14
Michilimackinac is 225 miles
N.N.W. of Detroit
Great Tract of Wood Land
UPPER CANADA
HOME DISTRICT
County of Simcoe
DISTRICT
Lake Simcoe
Hollands R.
FRENCH ROYALISTS
YORK
MISSISSAUGA
DURHAM
NORTHUMBERLAND
L. Nice
ADDINGTON
MIDLAND
DISTRICT
HASTINGS
FRONTENAC
PRINCE EDWARD
Kingston
Pittsburg
Pt. Edward's Bay
ONTARIO
Wolfe I.
Carleton I.
Straits of Ontario
LAKE ONTARIO
Sophiasburg
Pt. Quinte
Nicholas I.
New Castle
Dundas Street
R. Trent
York
Burlington Bay
Stoney Creek
40 Mile Creek
20 Mile Creek
Beaver Dams
Mississauga Pt.
Niagara Harbour
Lat. 43.15.47.
Lon. 78.25.
Ft. George
Queenston
Niagara
Lundy's Lane
Chippawa
Whirlpool
Niagara Falls
Grand R.
R. Tonewanto
Black Rock
Ft. Erie
Pt. Abino
Pt. Industry
Tonewanto Fishing Bay
Canoe Plain
Irondiquet Bay
Athens
Sackett's Harbour
Hungry Bay
Black River
Chenesco R.
Williamsburg
Little Sodus
Fish I.
Oswego
Geneva
Seneca R.
Cross L.
Seneca Lake
Cayuga L.
Oneida Lake
LINCOLN
NORFOLK
SUFFOLK
ESSEX
KENT
LAKE ERIE
Lake St. Clair
River St. Clair
DETROIT
Horan's Town
Grand Marsh
Turkey
Maguaga
Grosse I.
Amherstburg
Frenchtown
Fort Miamis
Miamis Bay
Cedar Pt.
Middle Sister
Pidgeon B.
Put-in Bay
Cunningham
South Foreland or Pt. Pelée
Pt. Pelée I.
Sandusky I.
Portage
Fort Stephenson
Pt. aux Pins or Landguard
Kettle Creek
Clear Creek
Town Plot
Portage
Poltechank Pt.
North Foreland or Long Pt.
Marsh
Rocky R.
Cayuga R.
R. Sloggan
R. Biche
Grand River
R. Desplains
Ville Joie
Old Fort
Catfish Creek
Fort le Boeuf
Chatauqhque Lake
St. Mary's Town
Ft. Franklin
French Cr.
Sugar Cr.
Allegheny River
Grand River
Main Branch unknown
Dundas Street
London
Chippewas
Delawares
The Great Bend
Moravian Village
R. Thames
Formerly Indian Village
Moraviantown
R. Chenail Ecarté
Longlist Settlements
R. Raisin
R. Rouge
R. Huron
SIX NATIONS
R. Grand

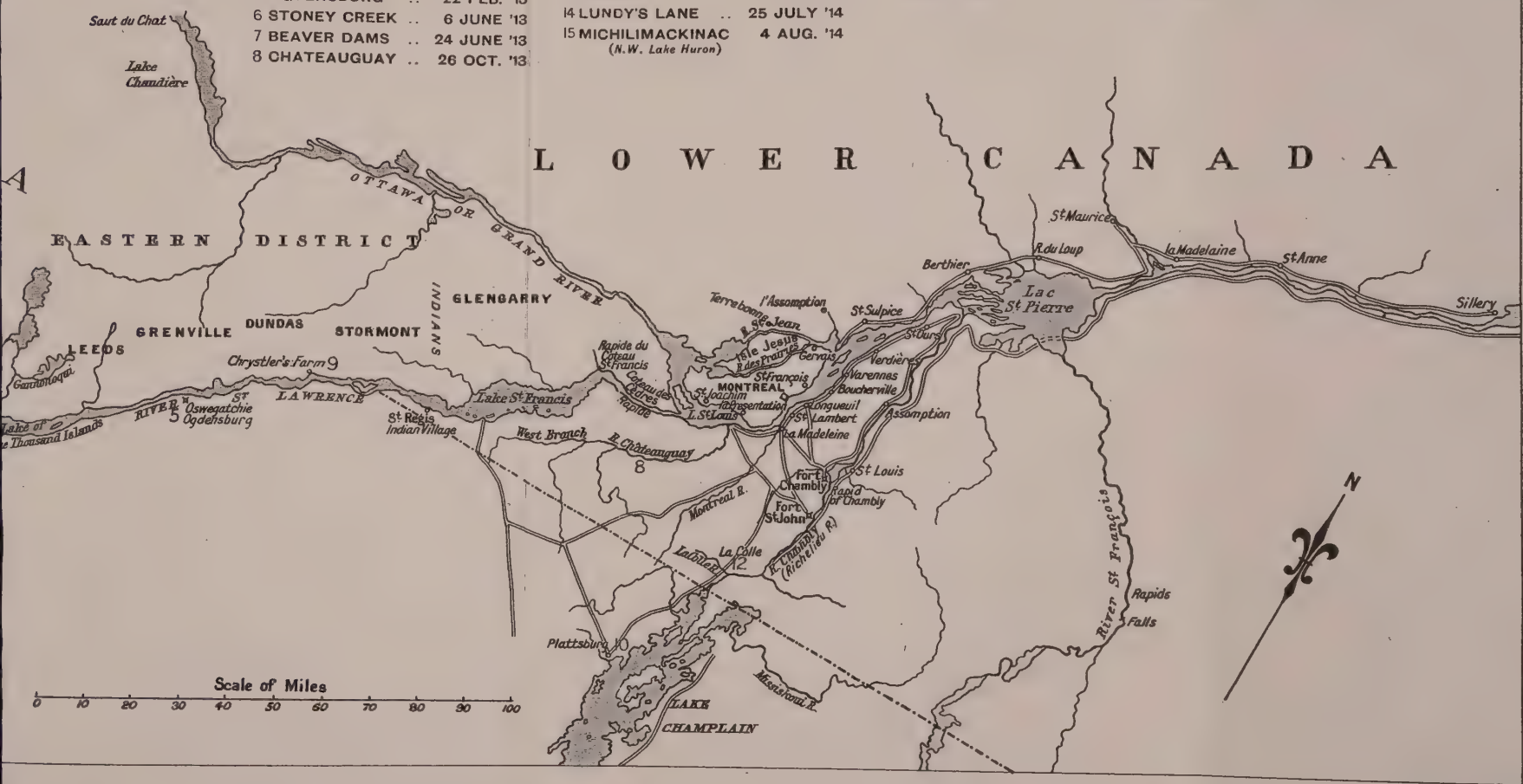
OF WAR

BRITISH VICTORIES

		DATES
1	MICHILIMACKINAC (N.W. Lake Huron)	17 JULY '12
2	DETROIT	16 AUG. '12
3	QUEENSTON	13 OCT. '12
4	FRENCHTOWN	22 JAN. '13
5	OGDENSBURG	22 FEB. '13
6	STONEY CREEK	6 JUNE '13
7	BEAVER DAMS	24 JUNE '13
8	CHATEAUGUAY	26 OCT. '13
9	CHRYSTLER'S FARM	11 NOV. '13
10	FORT NIAGARA	19 DEC. '13
11	BLACK ROCK	30 DEC. '13
12	LA COLLE	30 MAR. '14
13	OSWEGO	6 MAY '14
14	LUNDY'S LANE	25 JULY '14
15	MICHILIMACKINAC (N.W. Lake Huron)	4 AUG. '14

AMERICAN VICTORIES

		DATES
1	YORK	27 APRIL '13
2	FORT GEORGE	27 MAY '13
3	SACKETT'S HARBOUR	29 MAY '13
4	FORT STEPHENSON	2 AUG. '13
5	LAKE ERIE	10 SEPT. '13
6	THE THAMES	5 OCT. '13
7	FORT ERIE	3 JULY '14
8	CHIPPAWA	5 JULY '14
9	FORT ERIE	15 AUG. '14
10	PLATTSBURG	11 SEPT. '14



Bartholomew, Edin.

CHAPTER I

OPPOSING CLAIMS

INTERNATIONAL disputes that end in war are not generally questions of absolute right and wrong. They may quite as well be questions of opposing rights. But, when there are rights on both sides, it is usually found that the side which takes the initiative is moved by its national desires as well as by its claims of right.

This could hardly be better exemplified than by the vexed questions which brought about the War of 1812. The British were fighting for life and liberty against Napoleon. Napoleon was fighting to master the whole of Europe. The United States wished to make as much as possible out of unrestricted trade with both belligerents. But Napoleon's Berlin Decree forbade all intercourse whatever with the British, while the British Orders-in-Council forbade all intercourse whatever with Napoleon and his allies, except on condition that the

trade should first pass through British ports. Between two such desperate antagonists there was no safe place for an unarmed, independent, 'free-trading' neutral. Every one was forced to take sides. The British being overwhelmingly strong at sea, while the French were correspondingly strong on land, American shipping was bound to suffer more from the British than from the French. The French seized every American vessel that infringed the Berlin Decree whenever they could manage to do so. But the British seized so many more for infringing the Orders-in-Council that the Americans naturally began to take sides with the French.

Worse still, from the American point of view, was the British Right of Search, which meant the right of searching neutral merchant vessels either in British waters or on the high seas for deserters from the Royal Navy. Every other people whose navy could enforce it had always claimed a similar right. But other peoples' rights had never clashed with American interests in at all the same way. What really roused the American government was not the abstract Right of Search, but its enforcement at a time when so many hands aboard American vessels were British subjects

evading service in their own Navy. The American theory was that the flag covered the crew wherever the ship might be. Such a theory might well have been made a question for friendly debate and settlement at any other time. But it was a new theory, advanced by a new nation, whose peculiar and most disturbing entrance on the international scene could not be suffered to upset the accepted state of things during the stress of a life-and-death war. Under existing circumstances the British could not possibly give up their long-established Right of Search without committing national suicide. Neither could they relax their own blockade so long as Napoleon maintained his. The Right of Search and the double blockade of Europe thus became two vexed questions which led straight to war.

But the American grievances about these two questions were not the only motives impelling the United States to take up arms. There were two deeply rooted national desires urging them on in the same direction. A good many Americans were ready to seize any chance of venting their anti-British feeling; and most Americans thought they would only be fulfilling their proper 'destiny' by wresting the whole of Canada from the British crown.

These two national desires worked both ways for war — supporting the government case against the British Orders-in-Council and Right of Search on the one hand, while welcoming an alliance with Napoleon on the other. Americans were far from being unanimous; and the party in favour of peace was not slow to point out that Napoleon stood for tyranny, while the British stood for freedom. But the adherents of the war party reminded each other, as well as the British and the French, that Britain had wrested Canada from France, while France had helped to wrest the Thirteen Colonies from the British Empire.

As usual in all modern wars, there was much official verbiage about the national claims and only unofficial talk about the national desires. But, again as usual, the claims became the more insistent because of the desires, and the desires became the more patriotically respectable because of the claims of right. 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights' was the popular catchword that best describes the two strong claims of the United States. 'Down with the British' and 'On to Canada' were the phrases that best reveal the two impelling national desires.

Both the claims and the desires seem quite simple in themselves. But, in their connection with American politics, international affairs, and opposing British claims, they are complex to the last degree. Their complexities, indeed, are so tortuous and so multitudinous that they baffle description within the limits of the present book. Yet, since nothing can be understood without some reference to its antecedents, we must take at least a bird's-eye view of the growing entanglement which finally resulted in the War of 1812.

The relations of the British Empire with the United States passed through four gradually darkening phases between 1783 and 1812—the phases of Accommodation, Unfriendliness, Hostility, and War. Accommodation lasted from the recognition of Independence till the end of the century. Unfriendliness then began with President Jefferson and the Democrats. Hostility followed in 1807, during Jefferson's second term, when Napoleon's Berlin Decree and the British Orders-in-Council brought American foreign relations into the five-year crisis which ended with the three-year war.

William Pitt, for the British, and John Jay, the first chief justice of the United States, are

the two principal figures in the Accommodation period. In 1783 Pitt, who, like his father, the great Earl of Chatham, was favourably disposed towards the Americans, introduced a temporary measure in the British House of Commons to regulate trade with what was now a foreign country 'on the most enlarged principles of reciprocal benefit' as well as 'on terms of most perfect amity with the United States of America.' This bill, which showed the influence of Adam Smith's principles on Pitt's receptive mind, favoured American more than any other foreign trade in the mother country, and favoured it to a still greater extent in the West Indies. Alone among foreigners the Americans were to be granted the privilege of trading between their own ports and the West Indies, in their own vessels and with their own goods, on exactly the same terms as the British themselves. The bill was rejected. But in 1794, when the French Revolution was running its course of wild excesses, and the British government was even less inclined to trust republics, Jay succeeded in negotiating a temporary treaty which improved the position of American sea-borne trade with the West Indies. His government urged him to get explicit statements of principle

inserted, more especially anything that would make cargoes neutral when under neutral flags. This, however, was not possible, as Jay himself pointed out. 'That Britain, 'he said, 'at this period, and involved in war, should not admit principles which would impeach the propriety of her conduct in seizing provisions bound to France, and enemy's property on board neutral vessels, does not appear to me extraordinary.' On the whole, Jay did very well to get any treaty through at such a time; and this mere fact shows that the general attitude of the mother country towards her independent children was far from being unfriendly.

Unfriendliness began with the new century, when Jefferson first came into power. He treated the British navigation laws as if they had been invented on purpose to wrong Americans, though they had been in force for a hundred and fifty years, and though they had been originally passed, at the zenith of Cromwell's career, by the only republican government that ever held sway in England. Jefferson said that British policy was so perverse, that when he wished to forecast the British line of action on any particular point he would first consider what it ought to be and then

infer the opposite. His official opinion was written in the following words: 'It is not to the moderation or justice of others we are to trust for fair and equal access to market with our productions, or for our due share in the transportation of them; but to our own means of independence, and the firm will to use them.' On the subject of impressment, or 'Sailors' Rights,' he was clearer still: 'The simplest rule will be that the vessel being American shall be evidence that the seamen on board of her are such.' This would have prevented the impressment of British seamen, even in British harbours, if they were under the American merchant flag—a principle almost as preposterous, at that particular time, as Jefferson's suggestion that the whole Gulf Stream should be claimed 'as of our waters.'

If Jefferson had been backed by a united public, or if his actions had been suited to his words, war would have certainly broken out during his second presidential term, which lasted from 1805 to 1809. But he was a party man, with many political opponents, and without unquestioning support from all on his own side, and he cordially hated armies, navies, and even a mercantile marine. His idea of an American Utopia was a common-

wealth with plenty of commerce, but no more shipping than could be helped.

> I trust [he said] that the good sense of our country will see that its greatest prosperity depends on a due balance between agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, and not on this protuberant navigation, which has kept us in hot water since the commencement of our government. . . . It is essentially necessary for us to have shipping and seamen enough to carry our surplus products to market, but beyond that I do not think we are bound to give it encouragement. . . . This exuberant commerce brings us into collision with other Powers in every sea.

Notwithstanding such opinions, Jefferson stood firm on the question of 'Sailors' Rights.' He refused to approve a treaty that had been signed on the last day of 1806 by his four commissioners in London, chiefly because it provided no precise guarantee against impressment. The British ministers had offered, and had sincerely meant, to respect all American rights, to issue special instructions against molesting American citizens under any circumstances, and to redress every case of

wrong. But, with a united nation behind them and an implacable enemy in front, they could not possibly give up the right to take British seamen from neutral vessels which were sailing the high seas. The Right of Search was the acknowledged law of nations all round the world; and surrender on this point meant death to the Empire they were bound to guard.

Their 'no surrender' on this vital point was, of course, anathema to Jefferson. Yet he would not go beyond verbal fulminations. In the following year, however, he was nearly forced to draw the sword by one of those incidents that will happen during strained relations. In June 1807 two French men-of-war were lying off Annapolis, a hundred miles up Chesapeake Bay. Far down the bay, in Hampton Roads, the American frigate *Chesapeake* was fitting out for sea. Twelve miles below her anchorage a small British squadron lay just within Cape Henry, waiting to follow the Frenchmen out beyond the three-mile limit. As Jefferson quite justly said, this squadron was 'enjoying the hospitality of the United States.' Presently the *Chesapeake* got under way; whereupon the British frigate *Leopard* made sail and cleared

the land ahead of her. Ten miles out the *Leopard* hailed her, and sent an officer aboard to show the American commodore the orders from Admiral Berkeley at Halifax. These orders named certain British deserters as being among the *Chesapeake's* crew. The American commodore refused to allow a search; but submitted after a fight, during which he lost twenty-one men killed and wounded. Four men were then seized. One was hanged; another died; and the other two were subsequently returned with the apologies of the British government.

James Monroe, of Monroe Doctrine fame, was then American minister in London. Canning, the British foreign minister, who heard the news first, wrote an apology on the spot, and promised to make 'prompt and effectual reparation' if Berkeley had been wrong. Berkeley was wrong. The Right of Search did not include the right to search a foreign man-of-war, though, unlike the modern 'right of search,' which is confined to cargoes, it did include the right to search a neutral merchantman on the high seas for any 'national' who was 'wanted.' Canning, however, distinctly stated that the men's nationality would affect the consideration of

restoring them or not. Monroe now had a good case. But he made the fatal mistake of writing officially to Canning before he knew the details, and, worse still, of diluting his argument with other complaints which had nothing to do with the affair itself. The result was a long and involved correspondence, a tardy and ungracious reparation, and much justifiable resentment on the American side.

Unfriendliness soon became Hostility after the *Chesapeake* affair had sharpened the sting of the Orders-in-Council, which had been issued at the beginning of the same year, 1807. These celebrated Orders simply meant that so long as Napoleon tried to blockade the British Isles by enforcing his Berlin Decree, just so long would the British Navy be employed in blockading him and his allies. Such decisive action, of course, brought neutral shipping more than ever under the power of the British Navy, which commanded all the seaways to the ports of Europe. It accentuated the differences between the American and British governments, and threw the shadow of the coming storm over the exposed colony of Canada.

Not having succeeded in his struggle for 'Sailors' Rights,' Jefferson now took up the

cudgels for 'Free Trade'; but still without a resort to arms. His chosen means of warfare was an Embargo Act, forbidding the departure of vessels from United States ports. This, although nominally aimed against France as well, was designed to make Great Britain submit by cutting off both her and her colonies from all intercourse with the United States. But its actual effect was to hurt Americans, and even Jefferson's own party, far more than it hurt the British. The Yankee skipper already had two blockades against 'Free Trade.' The Embargo Act added a third. Of course it was evaded; and a good deal of shipping went from the United States and passed into Canadian ports under the Union Jack. Jefferson and his followers, however, persisted in taking their own way. So Canada gained from the embargo much of what the Americans were losing. Quebec and Halifax swarmed with contrabandists, who smuggled back return cargoes into the New England ports, which were Federalist in party allegiance, and only too ready to evade or defy the edicts of the Democratic administration. Jefferson had, it is true, the satisfaction of inflicting much temporary hardship on cotton-spinning Manchester. But the

American cotton-growing South suffered even more.

The American claims of 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights' were opposed by the British counter-claims of the Orders-in-Council and the Right of Search. But 'Down with the British' and 'On to Canada' were without exact equivalents on the other side. The British at home were a good deal irritated by so much unfriendliness and hostility behind them while they were engaged with Napoleon in front. Yet they could hardly be described as anti-American; and they certainly had no wish to fight, still less to conquer, the United States. Canada did contain an anti-American element in the United Empire Loyalists, whom the American Revolution had driven from their homes. But her general wish was to be left in peace. Failing that, she was prepared for defence.

Anti-British feeling probably animated at least two-thirds of the American people on every question that caused international friction; and the Jeffersonian Democrats, who were in power, were anti-British to a man. So strong was this feeling among them that they continued to side with France even when she was under the military despotism of

Napoleon. He was the arch-enemy of England in Europe. They were the arch-enemy of England in America. This alone was enough to overcome their natural repugnance to his autocratic ways. Their position towards the British was such that they could not draw back from France, whose change of government had made her a more efficient anti-British friend. 'Let us unite with France and stand or fall together' was the cry the Democratic press repeated for years in different forms. It was strangely prophetic. Jefferson's Embargo Act of 1808 began its self-injurious career at the same time that the Peninsular War began to make the first injurious breach in Napoleon's Continental System. Madison's declaration of war in 1812 coincided with the opening of Napoleon's disastrous campaign in Russia.

The Federalists, the party in favour of peace with the British, included many of the men who had done most for Independence; and they were all, of course, above suspicion as patriotic Americans. But they were not unlike transatlantic, self-governing Englishmen. They had been alienated by the excesses of the French Revolution; and they could not condone the tyranny of Napoleon. They

preferred American statesmen of the type of Washington and Hamilton to those of the type of Jefferson and Madison. And they were not inclined to be more anti-British than the occasion required. They were strongest in New England and New York. The Democrats were strongest throughout the South and in what was then the West. The Federalists had been in power during the Accommodation period. The Democrats began with Unfriendliness, continued with Hostility, and ended with War.

The Federalists did not hesitate to speak their mind. Their loss of power had sharpened their tongues; and they were often no more generous to the Democrats and to France than the Democrats were to them and to the British. But, on the whole, they made for goodwill on both sides, as well as for a better understanding of each other's rights and difficulties; and so they made for peace. The general current, however, was against them, even before the *Chesapeake* affair; and several additional incidents helped to quicken it afterwards. In 1808 the toast of the President of the United States was received with hisses at a great public dinner in London, given to the leaders of the Spanish revolt

against Napoleon by British admirers. In 1811 the British sloop-of-war *Little Belt* was overhauled by the American frigate *President* fifty miles off-shore and forced to strike, after losing thirty-two men and being reduced to a mere battered hulk. The vessels came into range after dark; the British seem to have fired first; and the Americans had the further excuse that they were still smarting under the *Chesapeake* affair. Then, in 1812, an Irish adventurer called Henry, who had been doing some secret-service work in the United States at the instance of the Canadian governor-general, sold the duplicates of his correspondence to President Madison. These were of little real importance; but they added fuel to the Democratic fire in Congress just when anti-British feeling was at its worst.

The fourth cause of war, the desire to conquer Canada, was by far the oldest of all. It was older than Independence, older even than the British conquest of Canada. In 1689 Peter Schuyler, mayor of Albany, and the acknowledged leader of the frontier districts, had set forth his 'Glorious Enterprize' for the conquest and annexation of New France. Phips's American invasion next year, carried out in complete independence of the home

government, had been an utter failure. So had the second American invasion, led by Montgomery and Arnold during the Revolutionary War, nearly a century later. But the Americans had not forgotten their long desire; and the prospect of another war at once revived their hopes. They honestly believed that Canada would be much better off as an integral part of the United States than as a British colony; and most of them believed that Canadians thought so too. The lesson of the invasion of the 'Fourteenth Colony' during the Revolution had not been learnt. The alacrity with which Canadians had stood to arms after the *Chesapeake* affair was little heeded. And both the nature and the strength of the union between the colony and the Empire were almost entirely misunderstood.

Henry Clay, one of the most warlike of the Democrats, said: 'It is absurd to suppose that we will not succeed in our enterprise against the enemy's Provinces. I am not for stopping at Quebec or anywhere else; but I would take the whole continent from them, and ask them no favours. I wish never to see peace till we do. God has given us the power and the means. We are to blame if we do not use them.' Eustis, the American Secretary of War,

said: 'We can take Canada without soldiers. We have only to send officers into the Provinces, and the people, disaffected towards their own Government, will rally round our standard.' And Jefferson summed it all up by prophesying that 'the acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighbourhood of Quebec, will be a mere matter of marching.' When the leaders talked like this, it was no wonder their followers thought that the long-cherished dream of a conquered Canada was at last about to come true.

CHAPTER II

OPPOSING FORCES

An armed mob must be very big indeed before it has the slightest chance against a small but disciplined army.

So very obvious a statement might well be taken for granted in the history of any ordinary war. But '1812' was not an ordinary war. It was a sprawling and sporadic war; and it was waged over a vast territory by widely scattered and singularly heterogeneous forces on both sides. For this reason it is extremely difficult to view and understand as one connected whole. Partisan misrepresentation has never had a better chance. Americans have dwelt with justifiable pride on the frigate duels out at sea and the two flotilla battles on the Lakes. But they have usually forgotten that, though they won the naval battles, the British won the purely naval war. The mother-country British, on the other hand, have made too much of their one important victory at

sea, have passed too lightly over the lessons of the other duels there, and have forgotten how long it took to sweep the Stars and Stripes away from the Atlantic. Canadians have, of course, devoted most attention to the British victories won in the frontier campaigns on land, which the other British have heeded too little and Americans have been only too anxious to forget. Finally, neither the Canadians, nor the mother-country British, nor yet the Americans, have often tried to take a comprehensive view of all the operations by land and sea together.

The character and numbers of the opposing forces have been even less considered and even more misunderstood. Militia victories have been freely claimed by both sides, in defiance of the fact that the regulars were the really decisive factor in every single victory won by either side, afloat or ashore. The popular notions about the numbers concerned are equally wrong. The totals were far greater than is generally known. Counting every man who ever appeared on either side, by land or sea, within the actual theatre of war, the united grand total reaches seven hundred thousand. This was most unevenly divided between the two opponents. The Americans

had about 575,000, the British about 125,000. But such a striking difference in numbers was matched by an equally striking difference in discipline and training. The Americans had more than four times as many men. The British had more than four times as much discipline and training.

The forces on the American side were a small navy and a swarm of privateers, a small regular army, a few 'volunteers,' still fewer 'rangers,' and a vast conglomeration of raw militia. The British had a detachment from the greatest navy in the world, a very small 'Provincial Marine' on the Lakes and the St Lawrence, besides various little subsidiary services afloat, including privateers. Their army consisted of a very small but latterly much increased contingent of Imperial regulars, a few Canadian regulars, more Canadian militia, and a very few Indians. Let us pass all these forces in review.

The American Navy. During the Revolution the infant Navy had begun a career of brilliant promise; and Paul Jones had been a name to conjure with. British belittlement deprived him of his proper place in history; but he was really the founder of the regular Navy that fought so gallantly in '1812.' A

tradition had been created and a service had been formed. Political opinion, however, discouraged proper growth. President Jefferson laid down the Democratic party's idea of naval policy in his first Inaugural. 'Beyond the small force which will probably be wanted for actual service in the Mediterranean, whatever annual sum you may think proper to appropriate to naval preparations would perhaps be better employed in providing those articles which may be kept without waste or consumption, and be in readiness when any exigence calls them into use. Progress has been made in providing materials for 74-gun ships.'[1] This 'progress' had been made in 1801. But in 1812, when Jefferson's disciple, Madison, formally declared war, not a single keel had been laid. Meanwhile, another idea of naval policy had been worked out into the ridiculous gunboat system. In 1807, during the crisis which followed the Berlin Decree, the Orders-in-Council, and the *Chesapeake*

[1] A ship-of-the-line, meaning a battleship or man-of-war strong enough to take a position in the line of battle, was of a different minimum size at different periods. The tendency towards increase of size existed a century ago as well as to-day. 'Fourth-rates,' of 50 and 60 guns, dropped out of the line at the beginning of the Seven Years' War. In 1812 the 74-gun three-decker was the smallest man-of-war regularly used in the line of battle.

affair, Jefferson wrote to Thomas Paine : ' Believing, myself, that gunboats are the only water defence which can be useful to us, and protect us from the ruinous folly of a navy, I am pleased with everything which promises to improve them.' Whether ' improved ' or not, these gunboats were found worse than useless as a substitute for ' the ruinous folly of a navy.' They failed egregiously to stop Jefferson's own countrymen from breaking his Embargo Act of 1808 ; and their weatherly qualities were so contemptible that they did not dare to lose sight of land without putting their guns in the hold. No wonder the practical men of the Navy called them ' Jeffs.'

When President Madison summoned Congress in 1811 war was the main topic of debate. Yet all he had to say about the Navy was contained in twenty-seven lukewarm words. Congress followed the presidential lead. The momentous naval vote of 1812 provided for an expenditure of six hundred thousand dollars, which was to be spread over three consecutive years and strictly limited to buying timber. Then, on the outbreak of war, the government, consistent to the last, decided to lay up the whole of their sea-going navy lest it should be captured by the British.

But this final indignity was more than the Navy could stand in silence. Some senior officers spoke their minds, and the party politicians gave way. The result was a series of victories which, of their own peculiar kind, have never been eclipsed. Not one American ship-of-the-line was ever afloat during the war; and only twenty-two frigates or smaller naval craft put out to sea. In addition, there were the three little flotillas on Lakes Erie, Ontario, and Champlain; and a few minor vessels elsewhere. All the crews together did not exceed ten thousand men, replacements included. Yet, even with these niggard means, the American Navy won the command of two lakes completely, held the command of the third in suspense, won every important duel out at sea, except the famous fight against the *Shannon*, inflicted serious loss on British sea-borne trade, and kept a greatly superior British naval force employed on constant and harassing duty.

The American Privateers. Besides the little Navy, there were 526 privately owned vessels which were officially authorized to prey on the enemy's trade. These were manned by forty thousand excellent seamen and had the chance of plundering the richest sea-borne commerce

in the world. They certainly harassed British commerce, even in its own home waters; and during the course of the war they captured no less than 1344 prizes. But they did practically nothing towards reducing the British fighting force afloat; and even at their own work of commerce-destroying they did less than one-third as much as the Navy in proportion to their numbers.

The American Army. The Army had competed with the Navy for the lowest place in Jefferson's Inaugural of 1801. 'This is the only government where every man will meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. . . . A well-disciplined militia is our best reliance for the first moments of war, till regulars may relieve them.' The Army was then reduced to three thousand men. 'Such were the results of Mr Jefferson's low estimate of, or rather contempt for, the military character,' said General Winfield Scott, the best officer the United States produced between '1812' and the Civil War. In 1808 'an additional military force' was authorized. In January 1812, after war had been virtually decided on, the establishment was raised to thirty-five thousand. But in June, when war had been declared, less than

a quarter of this total could be called effectives, and more than half were still 'wanting to complete.' The grand total of all American regulars, including those present with the colours on the outbreak of hostilities as well as those raised during the war, amounted to fifty-six thousand. Yet no general had six thousand actually in the firing line of any one engagement.

The United States Volunteers. Ten thousand volunteers were raised, from first to last. They differed from the regulars in being enlisted for shorter terms of service and in being generally allowed to elect their own regimental officers. Theoretically they were furnished in fixed quotas by the different States, according to population. They resembled the regulars in other respects, especially in being directly under Federal, not State, authority.

The Rangers. Three thousand men with a real or supposed knowledge of backwoods life served in the war. They operated in groups and formed a very unequal force—good, bad, and indifferent. Some were under the Federal authority. Others belonged to the different States. As a distinct class they had no appreciable influence on the major results of the war.

The Militia. The vast bulk of the American forces, more than three-quarters of the grand total by land and sea, was made up of the militia belonging to the different States of the Union. These militiamen could not be moved outside of their respective States without State authority; and individual consent was also necessary to prolong a term of enlistment, even if the term should come to an end in the middle of a battle. Some enlisted for several months; others for no more than one. Very few had any military knowledge whatever; and most of the officers were no better trained than the men. The totals from all the different States amounted to 456,463. Not half of these ever got near the front; and not nearly half of those who did get there ever came into action at all. Except at New Orleans, where the conditions were quite abnormal, the militia never really helped to decide the issue of any battle, except, indeed, against their own army. 'The militia thereupon broke and fled' recurs with tiresome frequency in numberless dispatches. Yet the consequent charges of cowardice are nearly all unjust. The fellow-countrymen of those sailors who fought the American frigates so magnificently were no special kind of cowards. But, as a raw militia,

they simply were to well-trained regulars what children are to men.

American Non-Combatant Services. There were more than fifty thousand deaths reported on the American side; yet not ten thousand men were killed or mortally wounded in all the battles put together. The medical department, like the commissariat and transport, was only organized at the very last minute, even among the regulars, and then in a most haphazard way. Among the militia these indispensable branches of the service were never really organized at all.

Such disastrous shortcomings were not caused by any lack of national resources. The population of the United States was about eight millions, as against eighteen millions in the British Isles. Prosperity was general; at all events, up to the time that it was checked by Jefferson's Embargo Act. The finances were also thought to be most satisfactory. On the very eve of war the Secretary of the Treasury reported that the national debt had been reduced by forty-six million dollars since his party had come into power. Had this 'war party' spent those millions on its Army and Navy, the war itself might have had an ending more satisfactory to the United States.

Let us now review the forces on the British side.

The eighteen million people in the British Isles were naturally anxious to avoid war with the eight millions in the United States. They had enough on their hands as it was. The British Navy was being kept at a greater strength than ever before; though it was none too strong for the vast amount of work it had to do. The British Army was waging its greatest Peninsular campaign. All the other naval and military services of what was already a world-wide empire had to be maintained. One of the most momentous crises in the world's history was fast approaching; for Napoleon, arch-enemy of England and mightiest of modern conquerors, was marching on Russia with five hundred thousand men. Nor was this all. There were troubles at home as well as dangers abroad. The king had gone mad the year before. The prime minister had recently been assassinated. The strain of nearly twenty years of war was telling severely on the nation. It was no time to take on a new enemy, eight millions strong, especially one who supplied so many staple products during peace and threatened both the sea flank of the mother

country and the land flank of Canada during war.

Canada was then little more than a long, weak line of settlements on the northern frontier of the United States. Counting in the Maritime Provinces, the population hardly exceeded five hundred thousand—as many people, altogether, as there were soldiers in one of Napoleon's armies, or Americans enlisted for service in this very war. Nearly two-thirds of this half-million were French Canadians in Lower Canada, now the province of Quebec. They were loyal to the British cause, knowing they could not live a French-Canadian life except within the British Empire. The population of Upper Canada, now Ontario, was less than a hundred thousand. The Anglo-Canadians in it were of two kinds: British immigrants and United Empire Loyalists, with sons and grandsons of each. Both kinds were loyal. But the 'U.E.L.'s' were anti-American through and through, especially in regard to the war-and-Democratic party then in power. They could therefore be depended on to fight to the last against an enemy who, having driven them into exile once, was now coming to wrest their second New-World home from its allegiance

to the British crown. They and their descendants in all parts of Canada numbered more than half the Anglo-Canadian population in 1812. The few thousand Indians near the scene of action naturally sided with the British, who treated them better and dispossessed them less than the Americans did. The only detrimental part of the population was the twenty-five thousand Americans, who simply used Canada as a good ground for exploitation, and who would have preferred to see it under the Stars and Stripes, provided that the change put no restriction on their business opportunities.

The British Navy. About thirty thousand men of the British Navy, only a fifth of the whole service, appeared within the American theatre of war from first to last. This oldest and greatest of all navies had recently emerged triumphant from an age-long struggle for the command of the sea. But, partly because of its very numbers and vast heritage of fame, it was suffering acutely from several forms of weakness. Almost twenty years of continuous war, with dull blockades during the last seven, was enough to make any service 'go stale.' Owing to the enormous losses recruiting had become exceedingly and increasingly difficult,

even compulsory recruiting by press-gang. At the same time, Nelson's victories had filled the ordinary run of naval men with an overweening confidence in their own invincibility; and this over-confidence had become more than usually dangerous because of neglected gunnery and defective shipbuilding. The Admiralty had cut down the supply of practice ammunition and had allowed British ships to lag far behind those of other nations in material and design. The general inferiority of British shipbuilding was such an unwelcome truth to the British people that they would not believe it till the American frigates drove it home with shattering broadsides. But it was a very old truth, for all that. Nelson's captains, and those of still earlier wars, had always competed eagerly for the command of the better built French prizes, which they managed to take only because the superiority of their crews was great enough to overcome the inferiority of their ships. There was a different tale to tell when inferior British vessels with 'run-down' crews met superior American vessels with first-rate crews. In those days training and discipline were better in the American mercantile marine than in the British; and the American Navy, of course,

shared in the national efficiency at sea. Thus, with cheap materials, good designs, and excellent seamen, the Americans started with great advantages over the British for single-ship actions; and it was some time before their small collection of ships succumbed to the grinding pressure of the regularly organized British fleet.

The Provincial Marine. Canada had a little local navy on the Lakes called the Provincial Marine. It dated from the Conquest, and had done good service again during the Revolution, especially in Carleton's victory over Arnold on Lake Champlain in 1776. It had not, however, been kept up as a proper naval force, but had been placed under the quartermaster-general's department of the Army, where it had been mostly degraded into a mere branch of the transport service. At one time the effective force had been reduced to 132 men; though many more were hurriedly added just before the war. Most of its senior officers were too old; and none of the juniors had enjoyed any real training for combatant duties. Still, many of the ships and men did well in the war, though they never formed a single properly organized squadron.

British Privateers. Privateering was not a

flourishing business in the mother country in 1812. Prime seamen were scarce, owing to the great number needed in the Navy and in the mercantile marine. Many, too, had deserted to get the higher wages paid in 'Yankees'—'dollars for shillings,' as the saying went. Besides, there was little foreign trade left to prey on. Canadian privateers did better. They were nearly all 'Bluenoses,' that is, they hailed from the Maritime Provinces. During the three campaigns the Court of Vice-Admiralty at Halifax issued letters of marque to forty-four privateers, which employed, including replacements, about three thousand men and reported over two hundred prizes.

British Commissariat and Transport. Transport, of course, went chiefly by water. Reinforcements and supplies from the mother country came out under convoy, mostly in summer, to Quebec, where bulk was broken, and whence both men and goods were sent to the front. There were plenty of experts in Canada to move goods west in ordinary times. The best of all were the French-Canadian voyageurs who manned the boats of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies. But there were not enough of them to carry on

the work of peace and war together. Great and skilful efforts, however, were made. Schooners, bateaux, boats, and canoes were all turned to good account. But the inland line of communications was desperately long and difficult to work. It was more than twelve hundred miles from Quebec to Amherstburg on the river Detroit, even by the shortest route.

The British Army. The British Army, like the Navy, had to maintain an exacting world-wide service, besides large contingents in the field, on resources which had been severely strained by twenty years of war. It was represented in Canada by only a little over four thousand effective men when the war began. Reinforcements at first came slowly and in small numbers. In 1813 some foreign corps in British pay, like the Watteville and the Meuron regiments, came out. But in 1814 more than sixteen thousand men, mostly Peninsular veterans, arrived. Altogether, including every man present in any part of Canada during the whole war, there were over twenty-five thousand British regulars. In addition to these there were the troops invading the United States at Washington and Baltimore, with the reinforcements that joined

them for the attack on New Orleans—in all, nearly nine thousand men. The grand total within the theatre of war was therefore about thirty-four thousand.

The Canadian Regulars. The Canadian regulars were about four thousand strong. Another two thousand took the place of men who were lost to the service, making the total six thousand, from first to last. There were six corps raised for permanent service: the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the New Brunswick Regiment, the Canadian Fencibles, the Royal Veterans, the Canadian Voltigeurs, and the Glengarry Light Infantry. The Glengarries were mostly Highland Roman Catholics who had settled Glengarry county on the Ottawa, where Ontario marches with Quebec. The Voltigeurs were French Canadians under a French-Canadian officer in the Imperial Army. In the other corps there were many United Empire Loyalists from the different provinces, including a good stiffening of old soldiers and their sons.

The Canadian Embodied Militia. The Canadian militia by law comprised every able-bodied man except the few specially exempt, like the clergy and the judges. A hundred thousand adult males were liable for service.

Various causes, however, combined to prevent half of these from getting under arms. Those who actually did duty were divided into 'Embodied' and 'Sedentary' corps. The embodied militia consisted of picked men, drafted for special service; and they often approximated so closely to the regulars in discipline and training that they may be classed, at the very least, as semi-regulars. Counting all those who passed into the special reserve during the war, as well as those who went to fill up the ranks after losses, there were nearly ten thousand of these highly trained, semi-regular militiamen engaged in the war.

The Canadian Sedentary Militia. The 'Sedentaries' comprised the rest of the militia. The number under arms fluctuated greatly; so did the length of time on duty. There were never ten thousand employed at any one time all over the country. As a rule, the 'Sedentaries' did duty at the base, thus releasing the better trained men for service at the front. Many had the blood of soldiers in their veins; and nearly all had the priceless advantage of being kept in constant touch with regulars. A passionate devotion to the cause also helped them to acquire, sooner than most other men, both military knowledge and that true spirit

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of discipline which, after all, is nothing but self-sacrifice in its finest patriotic form.

The Indians. Nearly all the Indians sided with the British or else remained neutral. They were, however, a very uncertain force, and the total number that actually served at the front throughout the war certainly fell short of five thousand.

This completes the estimate of the opposing forces—of the more than half a million Americans against the hundred and twenty-five thousand British; with these great odds entirely reversed whenever the comparison is made not between mere quantities of men but between their respective degrees of discipline and training.

But it does not complete the comparison between the available resources of the two opponents in one most important particular—finance. The Army Bill Act, passed at Quebec on August 1, 1812, was the greatest single financial event in the history of Canada. It was also full of political significance; for the parliament of Lower Canada was overwhelmingly French-Canadian. The million dollars authorized for issue, together with interest at six per cent, pledged that province to the equivalent of four years' revenue. The risk

was no light one. But it was nobly run and well rewarded. These Army Bills were the first paper money in the whole New World that never lost face value for a day, that paid all their statutory interest, and that were finally redeemed at par. The denominations ran from one dollar up to four hundred dollars. Bills of one, two, three, and four dollars could always be cashed at the Army Bill Office in Quebec. After due notice the whole issue was redeemed in November 1816. A special feature well worth noting is the fact that Army Bills sometimes commanded a premium of five per cent over gold itself, because, being convertible into government bills of exchange on London, they were secure against any fluctuations in the price of bullion. A special comparison well worth making is that between their own remarkable stability and the equally remarkable instability of similar instruments of finance in the United States, where, after vainly trying to help the government through its difficulties, every bank outside of New England was forced to suspend specie payments in 1814, the year of the Great Blockade.

CHAPTER III

1812: OFF TO THE FRONT

PRESIDENT MADISON sent his message to Congress on the 1st of June and signed the resultant 'war bill' on the 18th following. Congress was as much divided as the nation on the question of peace or war. The vote in the House of Representatives was seventy-nine to forty-nine, while in the Senate it was nineteen to thirteen. The government itself was 'solid.' But it did little enough to make up for the lack of national whole-heartedness by any efficiency of its own. Madison was less zealous about the war than most of his party. He was no Pitt or Lincoln to ride the storm, but a respectable lawyer-politician, whose forte was writing arguments, not wielding his country's sword. Nor had he in his Cabinet a single statesman with a genius for making war. His war secretary, William Eustis, never grasped the military situation at all, and had to be replaced by John Arm-

strong after the egregious failures of the first campaign. During the war debate in June, Eustis was asked to report to Congress how many of the 'additional' twenty-five thousand men authorized in January had already been enlisted. The best answer he could make was a purely 'unofficial opinion' that the number was believed to exceed five thousand.

The first move to the front was made by the Navy. Under very strong pressure the Cabinet had given up the original idea of putting the ships under a glass case; and four days after the declaration of war orders were sent to the senior naval officer, Commodore Rodgers, to 'protect our returning commerce' by scattering his ships about the American coast just where the British squadron at Halifax would be most likely to defeat them one by one. Happily for the United States, these orders were too late. Rodgers had already sailed. He was a man of action. His little squadron of three frigates, one sloop, and one brig lay in the port of New York, all ready waiting for the word. And when news of the declaration arrived, he sailed within the hour, and set out in pursuit of a British squadron that was convoying a fleet of merchantmen from

the West Indies to England. He missed the convoy, which worked into Liverpool, Bristol, and London by getting to the north of him. But, for all that, his sudden dash into British waters with an active, concentrated squadron produced an excellent effect. The third day out the British frigate *Belvidera* met him and had to run for her life into Halifax. The news of this American squadron's being at large spread alarm all over the routes between Canada and the outside world. Rodgers turned south within a few hours' sail of the English Channel, turned west off Madeira, gave Halifax a wide berth, and reached Boston ten weeks out from Sandy Hook. 'We have been so completely occupied in looking out for Commodore Rodgers,' wrote a British naval officer, 'that we have taken very few prizes.' Even Madison was constrained to admit that this offensive move had had the defensive results he had hoped to reach in his own 'defensive' way. 'Our Trade has reached our ports, having been much favoured by a squadron under Commodore Rodgers.'

The policy of squadron cruising was continued throughout the autumn and winter of 1812. There were no squadron battles. But there was unity of purpose; and British

convoys were harassed all over the Atlantic till well on into the next year. During this period there were five famous duels, which have made the *Constitution* and the *United States*, the *Hornet* and the *Wasp*, four names to conjure with wherever the Stars and Stripes are flown. The *Constitution* fought the first, when she took the *Guerrière* in August, due east of Boston and south of Newfoundland. The *Wasp* won the second in September, by taking the *Frolic* half-way between Halifax and Bermuda. The *United States* won the third in October, by defeating the *Macedonian* south-west of Madeira. The *Constitution* won the fourth in December, off Bahia in Brazil, by defeating the *Java*. And the *Hornet* won the fifth in February, by taking the *Peacock*, off Demerara, on the coast of British Guiana.

This closed the first period of the war at sea. The British government had been so anxious to avoid war, and to patch up peace again after war had broken out, that they purposely refrained from putting forth their full available naval strength till 1813. At the same time, they would naturally have preferred victory to defeat; and the fact that most of the British Navy was engaged elsewhere, and that what was available was

partly held in leash, by no means dims the glory of those four men-of-war which the Americans fought with so much bravery and skill, and with such well-deserved success. No wonder Wellington said peace with the United States would be worth having at any honourable price, 'if we could only take some of their damned frigates!' Peace was not to come for another eighteen months. But though the Americans won a few more duels out at sea, besides two annihilating flotilla victories on the Lakes, their coast was blockaded as completely as Napoleon's, once the British Navy had begun its concerted movements on a comprehensive scale. From that time forward the British began to win the naval war, although they won no battles and only one duel that has lived in history. This dramatic duel, fought between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* on June 1, 1813, was not itself a more decisive victory for the British than previous frigate duels had been for the Americans. But it serves better than any other special event to mark the change from the first period, when the Americans roved the sea as conquerors, to the second, when they were gradually blockaded into utter impotence.

Having now followed the thread of naval events to a point beyond the other limits of this chapter, we must return to the American movements against the Canadian frontier and the British counter-movements intended to checkmate them.

Quebec and Halifax, the two great Canadian seaports, were safe from immediate American attack; though Quebec was the ultimate objective of the Americans all through the war. But the frontier west of Quebec offered several tempting chances for a vigorous invasion, if the American naval and military forces could only be made to work together. The whole life of Canada there depended absolutely on her inland waterways. If the Americans could cut the line of the St Lawrence and Great Lakes at any critical point, the British would lose everything to the west of it; and there were several critical points of connection along this line. St Joseph's Island, commanding the straits between Lake Superior and Lake Huron, was a vital point of contact with all the Indians to the west. It was the British counterpoise to the American post at Michilimackinac, which commanded the straits between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. Detroit commanded the waterway between Lake Huron

and Lake Erie; while the command of the Niagara peninsula ensured the connection between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. At the head of the St Lawrence, guarding the entrance to Lake Ontario, stood Kingston. Montreal was an important station midway between Kingston and Quebec, besides being an excellent base for an army thrown forward against the American frontier. Quebec was the general base from which all the British forces were directed and supplied.

Quick work, by water and land together, was essential for American success before the winter, even if the Canadians were really so anxious to change their own flag for the Stars and Stripes. But the American government put the cart before the horse—the Army before the Navy—and weakened the military forces of invasion by dividing them into two independent commands. General Henry Dearborn was appointed commander-in-chief, but only with control over the north-eastern country, that is, New England and New York. Thirty years earlier Dearborn had served in the War of Independence as a junior officer; and he had been Jefferson's Secretary of War. Yet he was not much better trained as a leader than his raw men were as followers,

and he was now sixty-one. He established his headquarters at Greenbush, nearly opposite Albany, so that he could advance on Montreal by the line of the Hudson, Lake Champlain, and the Richelieu. The intended advance, however, did not take place this year. Greenbush was rather a recruiting depot and camp of instruction than the base of an army in the field; and the actual campaign had hardly begun before the troops went into winter quarters. The commander of the north-western army was General William Hull. And his headquarters were to be Detroit, from which Upper Canada was to be quickly overrun without troubling about the co-operation of the Navy. Like Dearborn, Hull had served in the War of Independence. But he had been a civilian ever since; he was now fifty-nine; and his only apparent qualification was his having been governor of Michigan for seven years. Not until September, after two defeats on land, was Commodore Chauncey ordered 'to assume command of the naval force on Lakes Erie and Ontario, and use every exertion to obtain control of them this fall.' Even then Lake Champlain, an essential link both in the frontier system and on Dearborn's proposed line of march, was totally forgotten.

To complete the dispersion of force, Eustis forgot all about the military detachments at the western forts. Fort Dearborn (now Chicago) and Michilimackinac, important as points of connection with the western tribes, were left to the devices of their own inadequate garrisons. In 1801 Dearborn himself, Eustis's predecessor as Secretary of War, had recommended a peace strength of two hundred men at Michilimackinac, usually known as 'Mackinaw.' In 1812 there were not so many at Mackinaw and Chicago put together.

It was not a promising outlook to an American military eye—the cart before the horse, the thick end of the wedge turned towards the enemy, three incompetent men giving disconnected orders on the northern frontier, and the western posts neglected. But Eustis was full of self-confidence. Hull was 'enthusing' his militiamen. And Dearborn was for the moment surpassing both, by proposing to 'operate, with effect, at the same moment, against Niagara, Kingston, and Montreal.'

From the Canadian side the outlook was also dark enough to the trained eye; though not for the same reasons. The menace here was from an enemy whose general resources

exceeded those in Canada by almost twenty to one. The silver lining to the cloud was the ubiquitous British Navy and the superior training and discipline of the various little military forces immediately available for defence.

The Maritime Provinces formed a subordinate command, based on the strong naval station of Halifax, where a regular garrison was always maintained by the Imperial government. They were never invaded, or even seriously threatened. It was only in 1814 that they came directly into the scene of action, and then only as the base from which the invasion of Maine was carried out.

We must therefore turn to Quebec as the real centre of Canadian defence, which, indeed, it was best fitted to be, not only from its strategical situation, but from the fact that it was the seat of the governor-general and commander-in-chief, Sir George Prevost. Like Sir John Sherbrooke, the governor of Nova Scotia, Prevost was a professional soldier with an unblemished record in the Army. But, though naturally anxious to do well, and though very suavely diplomatic, he was not the man, as we shall often see, either to face a military crisis or to stop the Americans from

SIR GEORGE PREVOST

From a painting in the Dominion Archives

stealing marches on him by negotiation. On the outbreak of war he was at headquarters in Quebec, dividing his time between his civil and military duties, greatly concerned with international diplomacy, and always full of caution.

At York (now Toronto) in Upper Canada a very different man was meanwhile preparing to checkmate Hull's 'north-western army' of Americans, which was threatening to invade the province. Isaac Brock was not only a soldier born and bred, but, alone among the leaders on either side, he had the priceless gift of genius. He was now forty-two, having been born in Guernsey on October 6, 1769, in the same year as Napoleon and Wellington. Like the Wolfes and the Montcalms, the Brocks had followed the noble profession of arms for many generations. Nor were the De Lisles, his mother's family, less distinguished for the number of soldiers and sailors they had been giving to England ever since the Norman Conquest. Brock himself, when only twenty-nine, had commanded the 49th Foot in Holland under Sir John Moore, the future hero of Corunna, and Sir Ralph Abercromby, who was so soon to fall victorious in Egypt. Two years after this he had stood beside another

and still greater man at Copenhagen, 'mighty Nelson,' who there gave a striking instance of how a subordinate inspired by genius can win the day by disregarding the over-caution of a commonplace superior. We may be sure that when Nelson turned his blind eye on Parker's signal of recall the lesson was not thrown away on Brock.

For ten long years of inglorious peace Brock had now been serving on in Canada, while his comrades in arms were winning distinction on the battlefields of Europe. This was partly due to his own excellence: he was too good a man to be spared after his first five years were up in 1807; for the era of American hostility had then begun. He had always been observant. But after 1807 he had redoubled his efforts to 'learn Canada,' and learn her thoroughly. People and natural resources, products and means of transport, armed strength on both sides of the line and the best plan of defence, all were studied with unremitting zeal. In 1811 he became the acting lieutenant-governor and commander of the forces in Upper Canada, where he soon found out that the members of parliament returned by the 'American vote' were bent on thwarting every effort he could make to prepare the

province against the impending storm. In 1812, on the very day he heard that war had been declared, he wished to strike the unready Americans hard and instantly at one of their three accessible points of assembly — Fort Niagara, at the upper end of Lake Ontario, opposite Fort George, which stood on the other side of the Niagara river; Sackett's Harbour, at the lower end of Lake Ontario, thirty-six miles from Kingston; and Ogdensburg, on the upper St Lawrence, opposite Fort Prescott. But Sir George Prevost, the governor-general, was averse from an open act of war against the Northern States, because they were hostile to Napoleon and in favour of maintaining peace with the British; while Brock himself was soon turned from this purpose by news of Hull's American invasion farther west, as well as by the necessity of assembling his own thwarting little parliament at York.

The nine days' session, from July 27 to August 5, yielded the indispensable supplies. But the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, as a necessary war measure, was prevented by the disloyal minority, some of whom wished to see the British defeated and all of whom were ready to break their oath of allegiance whenever it suited them to do so. The

patriotic majority, returned by the votes of United Empire Loyalists and all others who were British born and bred, issued an address that echoed the appeal made by Brock himself in the following words: 'We are engaged in an awful and eventful contest. By unanimity and despatch in our councils and by vigour in our operations we may teach the enemy this lesson: That a country defended by free men, enthusiastically devoted to the cause of their King and Constitution, can never be conquered.'

On August 5, being at last clear of his immediate duties as a civil governor, Brock threw himself ardently into the work of defeating Hull, who had crossed over into Canada from Detroit on July 11 and issued a proclamation at Sandwich the following day. This proclamation shows admirably the sort of impression which the invaders wished to produce on Canadians.

> The United States are sufficiently powerful to afford you every security consistent with their rights and your expectations. I tender you the invaluable blessings of Civil, Political, and Religious Liberty. . . . The arrival of an army of Friends must

be hailed by you with a cordial welcome. You will be emancipated from Tyranny and Oppression and restored to the dignified station of Freemen. . . . If, contrary to your own interest and the just expectation of my country, you should take part in the approaching contest, you will be considered and treated as enemies and the horrors and calamities of war will Stalk before you. If the barbarous and Savage policy of Great Britain be pursued, and the savages let loose to murder our Citizens and butcher our women and children, this war will be a war of extermination. The first stroke with the Tomahawk, the first attempt with the Scalping Knife, will be the Signal for one indiscriminate scene of desolation. No white man found fighting by the Side of an Indian will be taken prisoner. Instant destruction will be his Lot. . . .

This was war with a vengeance. But Hull felt less confidence than his proclamation was intended to display. He knew that, while the American government had been warned in January about the necessity of securing the naval command of Lake Erie, no steps had

yet been taken to secure it. Ever since the beginning of March, when he had written a report based on his seven years' experience as governor of Michigan, he had been gradually learning that Eustis was bent on acting in defiance of all sound military advice. In April he had accepted his new position very much against his will and better judgment. In May he had taken command of the assembling militiamen at Dayton in Ohio. In June he had been joined by a battalion of inexperienced regulars. And now, in July, he was already feeling the ill effects of having to carry on what should have been an amphibious campaign without the assistance of any proper force afloat; for on the 2nd, ten days before he issued his proclamation at Sandwich, Lieutenant Rolette, an enterprising French-Canadian officer in the Provincial Marine, had cut his line of communication along the Detroit and had taken an American schooner which contained his official plan of campaign, besides a good deal of baggage and stores.

There were barely six hundred British on the line of the Detroit when Hull first crossed over to Sandwich with twenty-five hundred men. These six hundred comprised less than

150 regulars, about 300 militia, and some 150 Indians. Yet Hull made no decisive effort against the feeble little fort of Malden, which was the only defence of Amherstburg by land. The distance was nothing, only twelve miles south from Sandwich. He sent a sort of flying column against it. But this force went no farther than half-way, where the Americans were checked at the bridge over the swampy little Rivière aux Canards by the Indians under Tecumseh, the great War Chief of whom we shall soon hear more.

Hull's failure to take Fort Malden was one fatal mistake. His failure to secure his communications southward from Detroit was another. Apparently yielding to the prevalent American idea that a safe base could be created among friendly Canadians without the trouble of a regular campaign, he sent off raiding parties up the Thames. According to his own account, these parties 'penetrated sixty miles into the settled part of the province.' According to Brock, they 'ravaged the country as far as the Moravian Town.' But they gained no permanent foothold.

By the beginning of August Hull's position had already become precarious. The Canadians had not proved friendly. The raid up

the Thames and the advance towards Amherstburg had both failed. And the first British reinforcements had already begun to arrive. These were very small. But even a few good regulars helped to discourage Hull; and the new British commander, Colonel Procter of the 41st, was not yet to be faced by a task beyond his strength. Worse yet for the Americans, Brock might soon be expected from the east; the Provincial Marine still held the water line of communication from the south; and dire news had just come in from the west.

The moment Brock had heard of the declaration of war he had sent orders post-haste to Captain Roberts at St Joseph's Island, either to attack the Americans at Michilimackinac or stand on his own defence. Roberts received Brock's orders on the 15th of July. The very next day he started for Michilimackinac with 45 men of the Royal Veterans, 180 French-Canadian voyageurs, 400 Indians, and two 'unwieldy' iron six-pounders. Surprise was essential, to prevent the Americans from destroying their stores; and the distance was a good fifty miles. But, 'by the almost unparalleled exertions of the Canadians who manned the boats, we arrived

at the place of Rendezvous at 3 o'clock the following morning.' One of the iron six-pounders was then hauled up the heights, which rise to eight hundred feet, and trained on the dumbfounded Americans, while the whole British force took post for storming. The American commandant, Lieutenant Hanks, who had only fifty-seven effective men, thereupon surrendered without firing a shot.

The news of this bold stroke ran like wildfire through the whole North-West. The effect on the Indians was tremendous, immediate, and wholly in favour of the British. In the previous November Tecumseh's brother, known far and wide as the 'Prophet,' had been defeated on the banks of the Tippecanoe, a river of Indiana, by General Harrison, of whom we shall hear in the next campaign. This battle, though small in itself, was looked upon as the typical victory of the dispossessing Americans; so the British seizure of Michilimackinac was hailed with great joy as being a most effective counter-stroke. Nor was this the only reason for rejoicing. Michilimackinac and St Joseph's commanded the two lines of communication between the western wilds and the Great Lakes; so the possession of both by the British was more

than a single victory, it was a promise of victories to come. No wonder Hull lamented this 'opening of the hive,' which 'let the swarms' loose all over the wilds on his inland flank and rear.

He would have felt more uneasy still if he had known what was to happen when Captain Heald received his orders at Fort Dearborn (Chicago) on August 9. Hull had ordered Heald to evacuate the fort as soon as possible and rejoin headquarters. Heald had only sixty-six men, not nearly enough to overawe the surrounding Indians. News of the approaching evacuation spread quickly during the six days of preparation. The Americans failed to destroy the strong drink in the fort. The Indians got hold of it, became ungovernably drunk, and killed half of Heald's men before they had gone a mile. The rest surrendered and were spared. Heald and his wife were then sent to Mackinaw, where Roberts treated them very kindly and sent them on to Pittsburg. The whole affair was one between Indians and Americans alone. But it was naturally used by the war party to inflame American feeling against all things British.

While Hull was writing to Fort Dearborn

and hearing bad news from Michilimackinac, he was also getting more and more anxious about his own communications to the south. With no safe base in Canada, and no safe line of transport by water from Lake Erie to the village of Detroit, he decided to clear the road which ran north and south beside the Detroit river. But this was now no easy task for his undisciplined forces, as Colonel Procter was bent on blocking the same road by sending troops and Indians across the river. On August 5, the day Brock prorogued his parliament at York, Tecumseh ambushed Hull's first detachment of two hundred men at Brownstown, eighteen miles south of Detroit. On the 7th Hull began to withdraw his forces from the Canadian side. On the 8th he ordered six hundred men to make a second attempt to clear the southern road. But on the 9th these men were met at Maguaga, only fourteen miles south of Detroit, by a mixed force of British—regulars, militia, and Indians. The superior numbers of the Americans enabled them to press the British back at first. But, on the 10th, when the British showed a firm front in a new position, the Americans retired discouraged. Next day Hull withdrew the last of his men from Cana-

dian soil, exactly one month after they had first set foot upon it. The following day was spent in consulting his staff and trying to reorganize his now unruly militia. On the evening of the 13th he made his final effort to clear the one line left, by sending out four hundred picked men under his two best colonels, M'Arthur and Cass, who were ordered to make an inland detour through the woods.

That same night Brock stepped ashore at Amherstburg.

CHAPTER IV

1812: BROCK AT DETROIT AND QUEENSTON HEIGHTS

THE prorogation which released Brock from his parliamentary duties on August 5 had been followed by eight days of the most strenuous military work, especially on the part of the little reinforcement which he was taking west to Amherstburg. The Upper Canada militiamen, drawn from the United Empire Loyalists and from the British-born, had responded with hearty goodwill, all the way from Glengarry to Niagara. But the population was so scattered and equipment so scarce that no attempt had been made to have whole battalions of 'Select Embodied Militia' ready for the beginning of the war, as in the more thickly peopled province of Lower Canada. The best that could be done was to embody the two flank companies — the Light and Grenadier companies—of the most urgently needed battalions. But as these companies contained all the picked men who were

readiest for immediate service, and as the Americans were very slow in mobilizing their own still more unready army, Brock found that, for the time being, York could be left and Detroit attacked with nothing more than his handful of regulars, backed by the flank-company militiamen and the Provincial Marine.

Leaving York the very day he closed the House there, Brock sailed over to Burlington Bay, marched across the neck of the Niagara peninsula, and embarked at Long Point with every man the boats could carry—three hundred, all told, forty regulars of the 41st and two hundred and sixty flank-company militiamen. Then, for the next five days, he fought his way, inch by inch, along the north shore of Lake Erie against a persistent westerly storm. The news by the way was discouraging. Hull's invasion had unsettled the Indians as far east as the Niagara peninsula, which the local militia were consequently afraid to leave defenceless. But once Brock reached the scene of action, his insight showed him what bold skill could do to turn the tide of feeling all along the western frontier.

It was getting on for one o'clock in the morning of August 14 when Lieutenant Rolette challenged Brock's leading boat from aboard

the Provincial Marine schooner *General Hunter*. As Brock stepped ashore he ordered all commanding officers to meet him within an hour. He then read Hull's dispatches, which had been taken by Rolette with the captured schooner and by Tecumseh at Brownstown. By two o'clock all the principal officers and Indian chiefs had assembled, not as a council of war, but simply to tell Brock everything they knew. Only Tecumseh and Colonel Nichol, the quartermaster of the little army, thought that Detroit itself could be attacked with any prospect of success. Brock listened attentively; made up his mind; told his officers to get ready for immediate attack; asked Tecumseh to assemble all the Indians at noon; and dismissed the meeting at four. Brock and Tecumseh read each other at a glance; and Tecumseh, turning to the tribal chiefs, said simply, 'This is a man,' a commendation approved by them all with laconic, deep 'Ho-ho's!'

Tecumseh was the last great leader of the Indian race and perhaps the finest embodiment of all its better qualities. Like Pontiac, fifty years before, but in a nobler way, he tried to unite the Indians against the exterminating American advance. He was apparently on the eve of forming his Indian alliance when he

returned home to find that his brother the Prophet had just been defeated at Tippecanoe. The defeat itself was no great thing. But it came precisely at a time when it could exert most influence on the unstable Indian character and be most effective in breaking up the alliance of the tribes. Tecumseh, divining this at once, lost no time in vain regrets, but joined the British next year at Amherstburg. He came with only thirty followers. But stray warriors kept on arriving; and many of the bolder spirits joined him when war became imminent. At the time of Brock's arrival there were a thousand effective Indians under arms. Their arming was only authorized at the last minute; for Brock's dispatch to Prevost shows how strictly neutral the Canadian government had been throughout the recent troubles between the Indians and Americans. He mentions that the chiefs at Amherstburg had long been trying to obtain the muskets and ammunition 'which for years had been withheld, agreeably to the instructions received from Sir James Craig, and since repeated by Your Excellency.'

Precisely at noon Brock took his stand beneath a giant oak at Amherstburg surrounded by his officers. Before him sat

Tecumseh. Behind Tecumseh sat the chiefs; and behind the chiefs a thousand Indians in their war-paint. Brock then stepped forward to address them. Erect, alert, broad-shouldered, and magnificently tall; blue-eyed, fair-haired, with frank and handsome countenance; he looked every inch the champion of a great and righteous cause. He said the Long Knives had come to take away the land from both the Indians and the British whites, and that now he would not be content merely to repulse them, but would follow and beat them on their own side of the Detroit. After the pause that was usual on grave occasions, Tecumseh rose and answered for all his followers. He stood there the ideal of an Indian chief: tall, stately, and commanding; yet tense, lithe, observant, and always ready for his spring. He the tiger, Brock the lion; and both unflinchingly at bay.

Next morning, August 15, an early start was made for Sandwich, some twelve miles north, where a five-gun battery was waiting to be unmasked against Detroit across the river. Arrived at Sandwich, Brock immediately sent across his aide-de-camp, Colonel Macdonell, with a letter summoning Hull to surrender. Hull wrote back to say he was prepared to

stand his ground. Brock at once unmasked his battery and made ready to attack next day. With the men on detachment Hull still had a total of twenty-five hundred. Brock had only fifteen hundred, including the Provincial Marine. But Hull's men were losing what discipline they had and were becoming distrustful both of their leaders and of themselves; while Brock's men were gaining discipline, zeal, and inspiring confidence with every hour. Besides, the British were all effectives; while Hull had over five hundred absent from Detroit and as many more ineffective on the spot; which left him only fifteen hundred actual combatants. He also had a thousand non-combatants — men, women, and children—all cowering for shelter from the dangers of battle, and half dead with the far more terrifying apprehension of an Indian massacre.

Brock's five-gun battery made excellent practice during the afternoon without suffering any material damage in return. One chance shell produced a most dismaying effect in Detroit by killing Hanks, the late commandant of Mackinaw, and three other officers with him. At twilight the firing ceased on both sides.

Immediately after dark Tecumseh led six hundred eager followers down to their canoes a little way below Sandwich. These Indians were told off by tribes, as battalions are by companies. There, in silent, dusky groups, moving soft-foot on their moccasins through the gloom, were Shawnees and Miamis from Tecumseh's own lost home beside the Wabash, Foxes and Sacs from the Iowan valley, Ottawas and Wyandots, Chippewas and Potawatomis, some braves from the middle prairies between the Illinois and the Mississippi, and even Winnebagoes and Dakotahs from the far North-West. The flotilla of crowded canoes moved stealthily across the river, with no louder noise than the rippling current made. As secretly, the Indians crept ashore, stole inland through the quiet night, and, circling north, cut off Hull's army from the woods. Little did Hull's anxious sentries think that some of the familiar cries of night-birds round the fort were signals being passed along from scout to scout.

As the beautiful summer dawn began to break at four o'clock that fateful Sunday morning, the British force fell in, only seven hundred strong, and more than half militia. The thirty gunners who had served the Sandwich

battery so well the day before also fell in, with five little field-pieces, in case Brock could force a battle in the open. Their places in the battery were ably filled by every man of the Provincial Marine whom Captain Hall could spare from the *Queen Charlotte*, the flagship of the tiny Canadian flotilla. Brock's men and his light artillery were soon afloat and making for Spring Wells, more than three miles below Detroit. Then, as the *Queen Charlotte* ran up her sunrise flag, she and the Sandwich battery roared out a challenge to which the Americans replied with random aim. Brock leaped ashore, formed front towards Hull, got into touch with Tecumseh's Indians on his left, and saw that the British land and water batteries were protecting his right, as prearranged with Captain Hall.

He had intended to wait in this position, hoping that Hull would march out to the attack. But, even before his men had finished taking post, the whole problem was suddenly changed by the arrival of an Indian to say that M'Arthur's four hundred picked men, whom Hull had sent south to bring in the convoy, were returning to Detroit at once. There was now only a moment to decide whether to retreat across the river, form front

against M'Arthur, or rush Detroit immediately. But, within that fleeting moment, Brock divined the true solution and decided to march straight on. With Tecumseh riding a grey mustang by his side, he led the way in person. He wore his full-dress gold-and-scarlet uniform and rode his charger Alfred, the splendid grey which Governor Craig had given him the year before, with the recommendation that 'the whole continent of America could not furnish you with so safe and excellent a horse,' and for the good reason that 'I wish to secure for my old favourite a kind and careful master.'

The seven hundred redcoats made a gallant show, all the more imposing because the militia were wearing some spare uniforms borrowed from the regulars and because the confident appearance of the whole body led the discouraged Americans to think that these few could only be the vanguard of much greater numbers. So strong was this belief that Hull, in sudden panic, sent over to Sandwich to treat for terms, and was astounded to learn that Brock and Tecumseh were the two men on the big grey horses straight in front of him. While Hull's envoys were crossing the river and returning, the Indians were be-

ginning to raise their war-whoops in the woods and Brock was reconnoitring within a mile of the fort. This looked formidable enough, if properly defended, as the ditch was six feet deep and twelve feet wide, the parapet rose twenty feet, the palisades were of twenty-inch cedar, and thirty-three guns were pointed through the embrasures. But Brock correctly estimated the human element inside, and was just on the point of advancing to the assault when Hull's white flag went up.

The terms were soon agreed upon. Hull's whole army, including all detachments, surrendered as prisoners of war, while the territory of Michigan passed into the military possession of King George. Abundance of food and military stores fell into British hands, together with the *Adams*, a fine new brig that had just been completed. She was soon rechristened the *Detroit*. The Americans sullenly trooped out. The British elatedly marched in. The Stars and Stripes came down defeated. The Union Jack went up victorious and was received with a royal salute from all the British ordnance, afloat and ashore. The Indians came out of the woods, yelling with delight and firing their muskets in the air. But, grouped by tribes, they remained out-

side the fort and settlement, and not a single outrage was committed. Tecumseh himself rode in with Brock; and the two great leaders stood out in front of the British line while the colours were being changed. Then Brock, in view of all his soldiers, presented his sash and pistols to Tecumseh. Tecumseh, in turn, gave his many-coloured Indian sash to Brock, who wore it till the day he died.

The effect of the British success at Detroit far exceeded that which had followed the capture of Mackinaw and the evacuation of Fort Dearborn. Those, however important to the West, were regarded as mainly Indian affairs. This was a white man's victory and a white man's defeat. Hull's proclamation thenceforth became a laughing-stock. The American invasion had proved a fiasco. The first American army to take the field had failed at every point. More significant still, the Americans were shown to be feeble in organization and egregiously mistaken in their expectations. Canada, on the other hand, had already found her champion and men quite fit to follow him.

Brock left Procter in charge of the West and hurried back to the Niagara frontier.

Arrived at Fort Erie on August 23 he was dismayed to hear of a dangerously one-sided armistice that had been arranged with the enemy. This had been first proposed, on even terms, by Prevost, and then eagerly accepted by Dearborn, after being modified in favour of the Americans. In proposing an armistice Prevost had rightly interpreted the wishes of the Imperial government. It was wise to see whether further hostilities could not be averted altogether; for the obnoxious Orders-in-Council had been repealed. But Prevost was criminally weak in assenting to the condition that all movements of men and material should continue on the American side, when he knew that corresponding movements were impossible on the British side for lack of transport. Dearborn, the American commander-in-chief, was only a second-rate general. But he was more than a match for Prevost at making bargains.

Prevost was one of those men who succeed half-way up and fail at the top. Pure Swiss by blood, he had, like his father, spent his life in the British Army, and had risen to the rank of lieutenant-general. He had served with some distinction in the West Indies, and had been made a baronet for defending

Dominica in 1805. In 1808 he became governor of Nova Scotia, and in 1811, at the age of forty-four, governor-general and commander-in-chief of Canada. He and his wife were popular both in the West Indies and in Canada; and he undoubtedly deserved well of the Empire for having conciliated the French Canadians, who had been irritated by his predecessor, the abrupt and masterful Craig. The very important Army Bill Act was greatly due to his diplomatic handling of the French Canadians, who found him so congenial that they stood by him to the end. His native tongue was French. He understood French ways and manners to perfection; and he consequently had far more than the usual sympathy with a people whose nature and circumstances made them particularly sensitive to real or fancied slights. All this is more to his credit than his enemies were willing to admit, either then or afterwards. But, in spite of all these good qualities, Prevost was not the man to safeguard British honour during the supreme ordeal of a war; and if he had lived in earlier times, when nicknames were more apt to become historic, he might well have gone down to posterity as Prevost the Pusillanimous.

Day after day Prevost's armistice kept the British helpless, while supplies and reinforcements for the Americans poured in at every advantageous point. Brock was held back from taking either Sackett's Harbour, which was meanwhile being strongly reinforced from Ogdensburg, or Fort Niagara, which was being reinforced from Oswego. Procter was held back from taking Fort Wayne, at the point of the salient angle south of Lake Michigan and west of Lake Erie—a quite irretrievable loss. For the moment the British had the command of all the Lakes. But their golden opportunity passed, never to return. By land their chances were also quickly disappearing. On September 1, a week before the armistice ended, there were less than seven hundred Americans directly opposed to Brock, who commanded in person at Queenston and Fort George. On the day of the battle in October there were nearly ten times as many along the Niagara frontier.

The very day Brock heard that the disastrous armistice was over he proposed an immediate attack on Sackett's Harbour. But Prevost refused to sanction it. Brock then turned his whole attention to the Niagara frontier, where the Americans were assem-

Bartholomew, Edinr.

bling in such numbers that to attack them was out of the question. The British began to receive a few supplies and reinforcements. But the Americans had now got such a long start that, on the fateful 13th of October, they outnumbered Brock's men four to one—4000 to 1000 along the critical fifteen miles between the Falls and Lake Ontario; and 6800 to 1700 along the whole Niagara river, from lake to lake, a distance of thirty-three miles. The factors which helped to redress the adverse balance of these odds were Brock himself, his disciplined regulars, the intense loyalty of the militia, and the 'telegraph.' This 'telegraph' was a system of visual signalling by semaphore, much the same as that which Wellington had used along the lines of Torres Vedras.

The immediate moral effects, however, were even more favourable to the Americans than the mere physical odds; for Prevost's armistice both galled and chilled the British, who were eager to strike a blow. American confidence had been much shaken in September by the sight of the prisoners from Detroit, who had been marched along the river road in full view of the other side. But it increased rapidly in October as reinforcements

poured in. On the 8th a council of war decided to attack Fort George and Queenston Heights simultaneously with every available man. But Smyth, the American general commanding above the Falls, refused to co-operate. This compelled the adoption of a new plan in which only a feint was to be made against Fort George, while Queenston Heights were to be carried by storm. The change entailed a good deal of extra preparation. But when Lieutenant Elliott, of the American Navy, cut out two British vessels at Fort Erie on the 9th, the news made the American troops so clamorous for an immediate invasion that their general, Van Rensselaer, was afraid either to resist them or to let their ardour cool.

In the American camp opposite Queenston all was bustle on the 10th of October; and at three the next morning the whole army was again astir, waiting till the vanguard had seized the landing on the British side. But a wrong leader had been chosen; mistakes were plentiful; and confusion followed. Nearly all the oars had been put into the first boat, which, having overshot the mark, was made fast on the British side; whereupon its commander disappeared. The troops on the American shore shivered in the drenching

autumn rain till after daylight. Then they went back to their sodden camp, wet, angry, and disgusted.

While the rain came down in torrents the principal officers were busy revising their plans. Smyth was evidently not to be depended on; but it was thought that, with all the advantages of the initiative, the four thousand other Americans could overpower the one thousand British and secure a permanent hold on the Queenston Heights just above the village. These heights ran back from the Niagara river along Lake Ontario for sixty miles west, curving north-eastwards round Burlington Bay to Dundas Street, which was the one regular land line of communication running west from York. Therefore, if the Americans could hold both the Niagara and the Heights, they would cut Upper Canada in two. This was, of course, quite evident to both sides. The only doubtful questions were, How should the first American attack be made and how should it be met?

The American general, Stephen Van Rensselaer, was a civilian who had been placed at the head of the New York State militia by Governor Tompkins, both to emphasize the fact that

expert regulars were only wanted as subordinates and to win a cunning move in the game of party politics. Van Rensselaer was not only one of the greatest of the old 'patroons' who formed the landed aristocracy of Dutch New York, but he was also a Federalist. Tompkins, who was a Democrat, therefore hoped to gain his party ends whatever the result might be. Victory would mean that Van Rensselaer had been compelled to advance the cause of a war to which he objected; while defeat would discredit both him and his party, besides providing Tompkins with the excuse that it would all have happened very differently if a Democrat had been in charge.

Van Rensselaer, a man of sense and honour, took the expert advice of his cousin, Colonel Solomon Van Rensselaer, who was a regular and the chief of the staff. It was Solomon Van Rensselaer who had made both plans, the one of the 8th, for attacking Fort George and the Heights together, and the one of the 10th, for feinting against Fort George while attacking the Heights. Brock was puzzled about what was going to happen next. He knew that the enemy were four to one and that they could certainly attack both places if Smyth would co-operate. He also knew

that they had boats and men ready to circle round Fort George from the American 'Four Mile Creek' on the lake shore behind Fort Niagara. Moreover, he was naturally inclined to think that when the boats prepared for the 11th were left opposite Queenston all day long, and all the next day too, they were probably intended to distract his attention from Fort George, where he had fixed his own headquarters.

On the 12th the American plan was matured and concentration begun at Lewiston, opposite Queenston. Large detachments came in, under perfect cover, from Four Mile Creek behind Fort Niagara. A smaller number marched down from the Falls and from Smyth's command still higher up. The camps at Lewiston and the neighbouring Tuscarora Village were partly concealed from every point on the opposite bank, so that the British could form no safe idea of what the Americans were about. Solomon Van Rensselaer was determined that the advance-guard should do its duty this time; so he took charge of it himself and picked out 40 gunners, 300 regular infantry, and 300 of the best militia to make the first attack. These were to be supported by seven hundred regulars. The rest of the four

thousand men available were to cross over afterwards. The current was strong; but the river was little more than two hundred yards wide at Queenston and it could be crossed in less than ten minutes. The Queenston Heights themselves were a more formidable obstacle, even if defended by only a few men, as they rose 345 feet above the landing-place.

There were only three hundred British in Queenston to meet the first attack of over thirteen hundred Americans; but they consisted of the two flank companies of Brock's old regiment, the 49th, supported by some excellent militia. A single gun stood on the Heights. Another was at Vrooman's Point a mile below. Two miles farther, at Brown's Point, stood another gun with another detachment of militia. Four miles farther still was Fort George, with Brock and his second-in-command, Colonel Sheaffe of the 49th. About nine miles above the Heights was the little camp at Chippawa, which, as we shall see, managed to spare 150 men for the second phase of the battle. The few hundred British above this had to stand by their own posts, in case Smyth should try an attack on his own account, somewhere between the Falls and Lake Erie.

At half-past three in the dark morning of the 13th of October, Solomon Van Rensselaer with 225 regulars sprang ashore at the Queenston ferry landing and began to climb the bank. But hardly had they shown their heads above the edge before the grenadier company of the 49th, under Captain Dennis, poured in a stinging volley which sent them back to cover. Van Rensselaer was badly wounded and was immediately ferried back. The American supports, under Colonel Christie, had trouble in getting across; and the immediate command of the invaders devolved upon another regular, Captain Wool.

As soon as the rest of the first detachment had landed, Wool took some three hundred infantry and a few gunners, half of all who were then present, and led them up-stream, in single file, by a fisherman's path which curved round and came out on top of the Heights behind the single British gun there. Progress was very slow in this direction, though the distance was less than a mile, as it was still pitch-dark and the path was narrow and dangerous. The three hundred left at the landing were soon reinforced, and the crossing went on successfully, though some of the American boats were carried down-stream to

the British post at Vrooman's, where all the men in them were made prisoners and marched off to Fort George.

Meanwhile, down at Fort George, Brock had been roused by the cannonade only three hours after he had finished his dispatches. Twenty-four American guns were firing hard at Queenston from the opposite shore and two British guns were replying. Fort Niagara, across the river from Fort George, then began to speak; whereupon Fort George answered back. Thus the sound of musketry, five to seven miles away, was drowned; and Brock waited anxiously to learn whether the real attack was being driven home at Queenston, or whether the Americans were circling round from their Four Mile Creek against his own position at Fort George. Four o'clock passed. The roar of battle still came down from Queenston. But this might be a feint. Not even Dennis at Queenston could tell as yet whether the main American army was coming against him or not. But he knew they must be crossing in considerable force, so he sent a dragoon galloping down to Brock, who was already in the saddle giving orders to Sheaffe and to the next senior officer, Evans, when this messenger arrived. Sheaffe was to follow

towards Queenston the very instant the Americans had shown their hand decisively in that direction; while Evans was to stay at Fort George and keep down the fire from Fort Niagara.

Then Brock set spurs to Alfred and raced for Queenston Heights. It was a race for more than his life, for more, even, than his own and his army's honour: it was a race for the honour, integrity, and very life of Canada. Miles ahead he could see the spurting flashes of the guns, the British two against the American twenty-four. Presently his quick eye caught the fitful running flicker of the opposing lines of musketry above the landing-place at Queenston. As he dashed on he met a second messenger, Lieutenant Jarvis, who was riding down full-speed to confirm the news first brought by the dragoon. Brock did not dare draw rein; so he beckoned Jarvis to gallop back beside him. A couple of minutes sufficed for Brock to understand the whole situation and make his plan accordingly. Then Jarvis wheeled back with orders for Sheaffe to bring up every available man, circle round inland, and get into touch with the Indians. A few strides more, and Brock was ordering the men on from Brown's Point. He paused

another moment at Vrooman's, to note the practice made by the single gun there. Then, urging his gallant grey to one last turn of speed, he burst into Queenston through the misty dawn just where the grenadiers of his own old regiment stood at bay.

In his full-dress red and gold, with the arrow-patterned sash Tecumseh had given him as a badge of honour at Detroit, he looked, from plume to spur, a hero who could turn the tide of battle against any odds. A ringing cheer broke out in greeting. But he paused no longer than just enough to wave a greeting back and take a quick look round before scaling the Heights to where eight gunners with their single eighteen-pounder were making a desperate effort to check the Americans at the landing-place. Here he dismounted to survey the whole scene of action. The Americans attacking Queenston seemed to be at least twice as strong as the British. The artillery odds were twelve to one. And over two thousand Americans were drawn up on the farther side of the narrow Niagara waiting their turn for the boats. Nevertheless, the British seemed to be holding their own. The crucial question was: could they hold it till Sheaffe came up from Fort George,

till Bullock came down from Chippawa, till both had formed front on the Heights, with Indians on their flanks and artillery support from below?

Suddenly a loud, exultant cheer sounded straight behind him, a crackling fire broke out, and he saw Wool's Americans coming over the crest and making straight for the gun. He was astounded; and well he might be, since the fisherman's path had been reported impassable by troops. But he instantly changed the order he happened to be giving from 'Try a longer fuse!' to 'Spike the gun and follow me!' With a sharp clang the spike went home, and the gunners followed Brock downhill towards Queenston. There was no time to mount, and Alfred trotted down beside his swiftly running master. The elated Americans fired hard; but their bullets all flew high. Wool's three hundred then got into position on the Heights; while Brock in the village below was collecting the nearest hundred men that could be spared for an assault on the invaders.

Brock rapidly formed his men and led them out of the village at a fast run to a low stone wall, where he halted and said, 'Take breath, boys; you'll need it presently!' on

which they cheered. He then dismounted and patted Alfred, whose flanks still heaved from his exertions. The men felt the sockets of their bayonets; took breath; and then followed Brock, who presently climbed the wall and drew his sword. He first led them a short distance inland, with the intention of gaining the Heights at the enemy's own level before turning riverwards for the final charge. Wool immediately formed front with his back to the river; and Brock led the one hundred British straight at the American centre, which gave way before him. Still he pressed on, waving his sword as an encouragement for the rush that was to drive the enemy down the cliff. The spiked eighteen-pounder was recaptured and success seemed certain. But, just as his men were closing in, an American stepped out of the trees, only thirty yards away, took deliberate aim, and shot him dead. The nearest men at once clustered round to help him, and one of the 49th fell dead across his body. The Americans made the most of this target and hit several more. Then the remaining British broke their ranks and retired, carrying Brock's body into a house at Queenston, where it remained throughout the day, while the battle raged all round.

Wool now re-formed his three hundred and ordered his gunners to drill out the eighteen-pounder and turn it against Queenston, where the British were themselves re-forming for a second attack. This was made by two hundred men of the 49th and York militia, led by Colonel John Macdonell, the attorney-general of Upper Canada, who was acting as aide-de-camp to Brock. Again the Americans were driven back. Again the gun was recaptured. Again the British leader was shot at the critical moment. Again the attack failed. And again the British retreated into Queenston.

Wool then hoisted the Stars and Stripes over the fiercely disputed gun; and several more boatloads of soldiers at once crossed over to the Canadian side, raising the American total there to sixteen hundred men. With this force on the Heights, with a still larger force waiting impatiently to cross, with twenty-four guns in action, and with the heart of the whole defence known to be lying dead in Queenston, an American victory seemed to be so well assured that a courier was sent post-haste to announce the good news both at Albany and at Dearborn's headquarters just across the Hudson. This done, Stephen Van Rensselaer decided to confirm his success

by going over to the Canadian side of the river himself. Arrived there, he consulted the senior regulars and ordered the troops to entrench the Heights, fronting Queenston, while the rest of his army was crossing.

But, just when the action had reached such an apparently victorious stage, there was, first, a pause, and then a slightly adverse change, which soon became decidedly ominous. It was as if the flood tide of invasion had already passed the full and the ebb was setting in. Far off, down-stream, at Fort Niagara, the American fire began to falter and gradually grow dumb. But at the British Fort George opposite the guns were served as well as ever, till they had silenced the enemy completely. While this was happening, the main garrison, now free to act elsewhere, were marching out with swinging step and taking the road for Queenston Heights. Near by, at Lewiston, the American twenty-four-gun battery was slackening its noisy cannonade, which had been comparatively ineffective from the first; while the single British gun at Vrooman's, vigorous and effective as before, was reinforced by two most accurate field-pieces under Holcroft in Queenston village, where the wounded but

undaunted Dennis was rallying his disciplined regulars and Loyalist militiamen for another fight. On the Heights themselves the American musketry had slackened while most of the men were entrenching; but the Indian fire kept growing closer and more dangerous. Up-stream, on the American side of the Falls, a half-hearted American detachment had been reluctantly sent down by the egregious Smyth; while, on the other side, a hundred and fifty eager British were pressing forward to join Sheaffe's men from Fort George.

As the converging British drew near them, the Americans on the Heights began to feel the ebbing of their victory. The least disciplined soon lost confidence and began to slink down to the boats; and very few boats returned when once they had reached their own side safely. These slinkers naturally made the most of the dangers they had been expecting—a ruthless Indian massacre included. The boatmen, nearly all civilians, began to desert. Alarming doubts and rumours quickly spread confusion through the massed militia, who now perceived that instead of crossing to celebrate a triumph they would have to fight a battle. John Lovett, who served with credit in the big

American battery, gave a graphic description of the scene: 'The name of Indian, or the sight of the wounded, or the Devil, or something else, petrified them. Not a regiment, not a company, scarcely a man, would go.' Van Rensselaer went through the disintegrating ranks and did his utmost to revive the ardour which had been so impetuous only an hour before. But he ordered, swore, and begged in vain.

Meanwhile the tide of resolution, hope, and coming triumph was rising fast among the British. They were the attackers now; they had one distinct objective; and their leaders were men whose lives had been devoted to the art of war. Sheaffe took his time. Arrived near Queenston, he saw that his three guns and two hundred muskets there could easily prevent the two thousand disorganized American militia from crossing the river; so he wheeled to his right, marched to St David's, and then, wheeling to his left, gained the Heights two miles beyond the enemy. The men from Chippawa marched in and joined him. The line of attack was formed, with the Indians spread out on the flanks and curving forward. The British in Queenston, seeing the utter impotence of the Americans

who refused to cross over, turned their fire against the Heights; and the invaders at once realized that their position had now become desperate.

When Sheaffe struck inland an immediate change of the American front was required to meet him. Hitherto the Americans on the Heights had faced down-stream, towards Queenston, at right angles to the river. Now they were obliged to face inland, with their backs to the river. Wadsworth, the American militia brigadier, a very gallant member of a very gallant family, immediately waived his rank in favour of Colonel Winfield Scott, a well-trained regular. Scott and Wadsworth then did all that men could do in such a dire predicament. But most of the militia became unmanageable, some of the regulars were comparatively raw; there was confusion in front, desertion in the rear, and no coherent whole to meet the rapidly approaching shock.

On came the steady British line, with the exultant Indians thrown well forward on the flanks; while the indomitable single gun at Vrooman's Point backed up Holcroft's two guns in Queenston, and the two hundred muskets under Dennis joined in this distracting fire against the American right till

the very last moment. The American left was in almost as bad a case, because it had got entangled in the woods beyond the summit and become enveloped by the Indians there. The rear was even worse, as men slank off from it at every opportunity. The front stood fast under Winfield Scott and Wadsworth. But not for long. The British brought their bayonets down and charged. The Indians raised the war-whoop and bounded forward. The Americans fired a hurried, nervous, straggling fusillade; then broke and fled in wild confusion. A very few climbed down the cliff and swam across. Not a single boat came over from the 'petrified' militia. Some more Americans, attempting flight, were killed by falling headlong or by drowning. Most of them clustered among the trees near the edge and surrendered at discretion when Winfield Scott, seeing all was lost, waved his handkerchief on the point of his sword.

The American loss was about a hundred killed, two hundred wounded, and nearly a thousand prisoners. The British loss was trifling by comparison, only a hundred and fifty altogether. But it included Brock; and his irreparable death alone was thought, by friend and foe alike, to have more than re-

dressed the balance. This, indeed, was true in a much more pregnant sense than those who measure by mere numbers could ever have supposed. For genius is a thing apart from mere addition and subtraction. It is the incarnate spirit of great leaders, whose influence raises to its utmost height the worth of every follower. So when Brock's few stood fast against the invader's many, they had his soaring spirit to uphold them as well as the soul and body of their own disciplined strength.

Brock's proper fame may seem to be no more than that which can be won by any conspicuously gallant death at some far outpost of a mighty empire. He ruled no rich and populous dominions. He commanded no well-marshalled host. He fell, apparently defeated, just as his first real battle had begun. And yet, despite of this, he was the undoubted saviour of a British Canada. Living, he was the heart of her preparation during ten long years of peace. Dead, he became the inspiration of her defence for two momentous years of war.

CHAPTER V

1813: THE BEAVER DAMS, LAKE ERIE, AND CHÂTEAUGUAY

THE remaining operations of 1812 are of quite minor importance. No more than two are worthy of being mentioned between the greater events before and after them. Both were abortive attempts at invasion — one across the upper Niagara, the other across the frontier south of Montreal.

After the battle of Queenston Heights Sheaffe succeeded Brock in command of the British, and Smyth succeeded Van Rensselaer in command of the Americans. Sheaffe was a harsh martinet and a third-rate commander. Smyth, a notorious braggart, was no commander at all. He did, however, succeed in getting Sheaffe to conclude an armistice that fully equalled Prevost's in its disregard of British interests. After making the most of it for a month he ended it on November 19, and began manœuvring round his headquarters

at Black Rock near Buffalo. After another eight days he decided to attack the British posts at Red House and Frenchman's Creek, which were respectively two and a half and five miles from Fort Erie. The whole British line of the upper Niagara, from Fort Erie to Chippawa, a distance of seventeen miles by the road along the river, was under the command of an excellent young officer, Colonel Bisshopp, who had between five and six hundred men to hold his seven posts. Fort Erie had the largest garrison—only a hundred and thirty men. Some forty men of the 49th and two small guns were stationed at Red House; while the light company of the 41st guarded the bridge over Frenchman's Creek. About two o'clock in the morning of the 28th one party of Americans pulled across to the ferry a mile below Fort Erie, and then, sheering off after being fired at by the Canadian militia on guard, made for Red House a mile and a half lower down. There they landed at three and fought a most confused and confusing action in the dark. Friend and foe became mixed up together; but the result was a success for the Americans. Meanwhile, the other party landed near Frenchman's Creek, reached the bridge, damaged it a little,

and had a fight with the 41st, who could not drive the invaders back till reinforcements arrived. At daylight the men from Chippawa marched into action, Indians began to appear, and the whole situation was re-established. The victorious British lost nearly a hundred, which was more than a quarter of those engaged. The beaten Americans lost more; but, being in superior numbers, they could the better afford it.

Smyth was greatly disconcerted. But he held a boat review on his own side of the river, and sent over a summons to Bisshopp demanding the immediate surrender of Fort Erie 'to spare the effusion of blood.' Bisshopp rejected the summons. But there was no effusion of blood in consequence. Smyth planned, talked, and manœuvred for two days more, and then tried to make his real effort on the 1st of December. By the time it was light enough for the British to observe him he had fifteen hundred men in boats, who all wanted to go back, and three thousand on shore, who all refused to go forward. He then held a council of war, which advised him to wait for a better chance. This closed the campaign with what, according to Porter, one of his own generals, was 'a scene of confusion

difficult to describe: about four thousand men without order or restraint discharging their muskets in every direction.' Next day 'The Committee of Patriotic Citizens' undertook to rebuke Smyth. But he retorted, not without reason, that 'the affair at Queenston is a caution against relying on crowds who go to the banks of the Niagara to look at a battle as on a theatrical exhibition.'

The other abortive attempt at invasion was made by the advance-guard of the commander-in-chief's own army. Dearborn had soon found out that his disorderly masses at Greenbush were quite unfit to take the field. But, four months after the declaration of war, a small detachment, thrown forward from his new headquarters at Plattsburg on Lake Champlain, did manage to reach St Regis, where the frontier first meets the St Lawrence, near the upper end of Lake St Francis, sixty miles south-west of Montreal. Here the Americans killed Lieutenant Rototte and a sergeant, and took the little post, which was held by a few voyageurs. Exactly a month later, on November 23, these Americans were themselves defeated and driven back again. Three days earlier than this a much stronger force of Americans had crossed the

frontier at Odelltown, just north of which there was a British blockhouse beside the river La Colle, a muddy little western tributary of the Richelieu, forty-seven miles due south of Montreal. The Americans fired into each other in the dark, and afterwards retired before the British reinforcements. Dearborn then put his army into winter quarters at Plattsburg, thus ending his much-heralded campaign against Montreal before it had well begun.

The American government was much disappointed at the failure of its efforts to make war without armies. But it found a convenient scapegoat in Hull, who was far less to blame than his superiors in the Cabinet. These politicians had been wrong in every important particular—wrong about the attitude of the Canadians, wrong about the whole plan of campaign, wrong in separating Hull from Dearborn, wrong in not getting men-of-war afloat on the Lakes, wrong, above all, in trusting to untrained and undisciplined levies. To complete their mortification, the ridiculous gunboats, in which they had so firmly believed, had done nothing but divert useful resources into useless channels ; while, on the other hand, the frigates, which they had pro-

posed to lay up altogether, so as to save themselves from 'the ruinous folly of a Navy,' had already won a brilliant series of duels out at sea.

There were some searchings of heart at Washington when all these military and naval misjudgments stood revealed. Eustis soon followed Hull into enforced retirement; and great plans were made for the campaign of 1813, which was designed to wipe out the disgrace of its predecessor and to effect the conquest of Canada for good and all.

John Armstrong, the new war secretary, and William Henry Harrison, the new general in the West, were great improvements on Eustis and Hull. But, even now, the American commanders could not decide on a single decisive attack supported by subsidiary operations elsewhere. Montreal remained their prime objective. But they only struck at it last of all. Michilimackinac kept their enemy in touch with the West. But they left it completely alone. Their general advance ought to have been secured by winning the command of the Lakes and by the seizure of suitable positions across the line. But they let the first blows come from the Canadian side;

and they still left Lake Champlain to shift for itself. Their plan was undoubtedly better than that of 1812. But it was still all parts and no whole.

The various events were so complicated by the overlapping of time and place all along the line that we must begin by taking a bird's-eye view of them in territorial sequence, starting from the farthest inland flank and working eastward to the sea. Everything west of Detroit may be left cut altogether, because operations did not recommence in that quarter until the campaign of the following year.

In January the British struck successfully at Frenchtown, more than thirty miles south of Detroit. They struck unsuccessfully, still farther south, at Fort Meigs in May and at Fort Stephenson in August; after which they had to remain on the defensive, all over the Lake Erie region, till their flotilla was annihilated at Put-in Bay in September and their army was annihilated at Moravian Town on the Thames in October. In the Lake Ontario region the situation was reversed. Here the British began badly and ended well. They surrendered York in April and Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara, in May. They were also repulsed in a grossly mismanaged

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attack on Sackett's Harbour two days after their defeat at Fort George. The opposing flotillas meanwhile fought several manœuvring actions of an indecisive kind, neither daring to risk battle and possible annihilation. But, as the season advanced, the British regained their hold on the Niagara peninsula by defeating the Americans at Stoney Creek and the Beaver Dams in June, and by clearing both sides of the Niagara river in December. On the upper St Lawrence they took Ogdensburg in February. They were also completely successful in their defence of Montreal. In June they took the American gunboats at Isle-aux-Noix on the Richelieu; in July they raided Lake Champlain; while in October and November they defeated the two divisions of the invading army at Châteauguay and Chrystler's Farm. The British news from sea also improved as the year wore on. The American frigate victories began to stop. The *Shannon* beat the *Chesapeake*. And the shadow of the Great Blockade began to fall on the coast of the Democratic South.

The operations of 1813 are more easily understood if taken in this purely territorial way. But in following the progress of the

war we must take them chronologically. No attempt can be made here to describe the movements on either side in any detail. An outline must suffice. Two points, however, need special emphasis, as they are both markedly characteristic of the war in general and of this campaign in particular. First, the combined effect of the American victories of Lake Erie and the Thames affords a perfect example of the inseparable connection between the water and the land. Secondly, the British victories at the Beaver Dams and Châteauguay are striking examples of the inter-racial connection among the forces that defended Canada so well. The Indians did all the real fighting at the Beaver Dams. The French Canadians fought practically alone at Châteauguay.

The first move of the invaders in the West was designed to recover Detroit and cut off Mackinaw. Harrison, victorious over the Indians at Tippecanoe in 1811, was now expected to strike terror into them once more, both by his reputation and by the size of his forces. In midwinter he had one wing of his army on the Sandusky, under his own command, and the other on the Maumee, under

Winchester, a rather commonplace general. At Frenchtown stood a little British post defended by fifty Canadians and a hundred Indians. Winchester moved north to drive these men away from American soil. But Procter crossed the Detroit from Amherstburg on the ice, and defeated Winchester's thousand whites with his own five hundred whites and five hundred Indians at dawn on January 22, making Winchester a prisoner. Procter was unable to control the Indians, who ran wild. They hated the Westerners who made up Winchester's force, as the men who had deprived them of their lands, and they now wreaked their vengeance on them for some time before they could be again brought within the bounds of civilized warfare. After the battle Procter retired to Amherstburg; Harrison began to build Fort Meigs on the Maumee; and a pause of three months followed all over the western scene.

But winter warfare was also going on elsewhere. A month after Procter's success, Prevost, when passing through Prescott, on the upper St Lawrence, reluctantly gave Colonel Macdonell of Glengarry provisional leave to attack Ogdensburg, from which the Americans were forwarding supplies to Sackett's Harbour,

sending out raiding parties, and threatening the British line of communication to the west. No sooner was Prevost clear of Prescott than Macdonell led his four hundred regulars and one hundred militia over the ice against the American fort. His direct assault failed. But when he had carried the village at the point of the bayonet the garrison ran. Macdonell then destroyed the fort, the barracks, and four vessels. He also took seventy prisoners, eleven guns, and a large supply of stores.

With the spring came new movements in the West. On May 9 Procter broke camp and retired from an unsuccessful siege of Fort Meigs (now Toledo) at the south-western corner of Lake Erie. He had started this siege a fortnight earlier with a thousand whites and a thousand Indians under Tecumseh ; and at first had seemed likely to succeed. But after the first encounter the Indians began to leave ; while most of the militia had soon to be sent home to their farms to prevent the risk of starvation. Thus Procter presently found himself with only five hundred effectives in face of a much superior and constantly increasing enemy. In the summer he returned to the attack, this time against the American position on the lower Sandusky, nearly thirty

miles east of Fort Meigs. There, on August 2, he tried to take Fort Stephenson. But his light guns could make no breach; and he lost a hundred men in the assault.

Meanwhile Dearborn, having first moved up from Plattsburg to Sackett's Harbour, had attacked York on April 27 with the help of the new American flotilla on Lake Ontario. This flotilla was under the personal orders of Commodore Chauncey, an excellent officer, who, in the previous September, had been promoted from superintendent of the New York Navy Yard to commander-in-chief on the Lakes. As Chauncey's forte was building and organization, he found full scope for his peculiar talents at Sackett's Harbour. He was also a good leader at sea and thus a formidable enemy for the British forces at York, where the third-rate Sheaffe was now in charge, and where Prevost had paved the way for a British defeat by allowing the establishment of an exposed navy yard instead of keeping all construction safe in Kingston. Sheaffe began his mistakes by neglecting to mount some of his guns before Dearborn and Chauncey arrived, though he knew these American commanders might come at any moment, and though he also knew how im-

portant it was to save a new British vessel that was building at York, because the command of the lake might well depend upon her. He then made another mistake by standing to fight in an untenable position against overwhelming odds. He finally retreated with all the effective regulars left, less than two hundred, burning the ship and yard as he passed, and leaving behind three hundred militia to make their own terms with the enemy. He met the light company of the 8th on its way up from Kingston and turned it back. With this retreat he left the front for good and became a commandant of bases, a position often occupied by men whose failures are not bad enough for courts-martial and whose saving qualities are not good enough for any more appointments in the field.

The Americans lost over two hundred men by an explosion in a British battery at York just as Sheaffe was marching off. Forty British had also been blown up in one of the forts a little while before. Sheaffe appears to have been a slack inspector of powder-magazines. But the Americans, who naturally suspected other things than slack inspection, thought a mine had been sprung on them after the fight was over. They consequently swore

SACKETT'S HARBOUR AND FORT NIAGARA IN 1812

Drawn on the spot by British army officers

Prints in the John Ross Robertson Collection, Toronto Public Library

revenge, burnt the parliament buildings, looted several private houses, and carried off books from the public library as well as plate from the church. Chauncey, much to his credit, afterwards sent back all the books and plate he could recover.

Exactly a month later, on May 27, Chauncey and Dearborn appeared off Fort George, after a run back to Sackett's Harbour in the meantime. Vincent, Sheaffe's successor in charge of Upper Canada, had only a thousand regulars and four hundred militia there. Dearborn had more than four times as many men; and Perry, soon to become famous on Lake Erie, managed the naval part of landing them. The American men-of-war brought the long, low, flat ground of Mississauga Point under an irresistible cross-fire while three thousand troops were landing on the beach below the covering bluffs. No support could be given to the opposing British force by the fire of Fort George, as the village of Newark intervened. So Vincent had to fight it out in the open. On being threatened with annihilation he retired towards Burlington, withdrawing the garrison of Fort George, and sending orders for all the other troops on the Niagara to follow by the shortest line. He

had lost a third of the whole force defending the Niagara frontier, both sides of which were now possessed by the Americans. But by nightfall on May 29 he was standing at bay, with his remaining sixteen hundred men, in an excellent strategical position on the Heights, half-way between York and Fort George, in touch with Dundas Street, the main road running east and west, and beside Burlington Bay, where he hoped to meet the British flotilla commanded by Yeo.

Captain Sir James Lucas Yeo was an energetic and capable young naval officer of thirty, whom the Admiralty had sent out with a few seamen to take command on the Lakes under Prevost's orders. He had been only seventeen days at Kingston when he sailed out with Prevost, on May 27, to take advantage of Chauncey's absence at the western end of the lake. Arrived before Sackett's Harbour, the attack was planned for the 29th. The landing force of seven hundred and fifty men was put in charge of Baynes, the adjutant-general, a man only too well fitted to do the 'dirty work' of the general staff under a weak commander-in-chief like Prevost. All went wrong at Sackett's Harbour. Prevost was 'present but not in command'; Baynes

SIR JAMES YEO

From a portrait by A. Buck

landed at the wrong place. Nevertheless, the British regulars scattered the American militiamen, pressed back the American regulars, set fire to the barracks, and halted in front of the fort. The Americans, thinking the day was lost, set fire to their stores and to Chauncey's new ships. Then Baynes and Prevost suddenly decided to retreat. Baynes explained to Prevost, and Prevost explained in a covering dispatch to the British government, that the fleet could not co-operate, that the fort could not be taken, and that the landing party was not strong enough. But, if this was true, why did they make an attack at all; and, if it was not true, why did they draw back when success seemed to be assured?

Meanwhile Chauncey, after helping to take Fort George, had started back for Sackett's Harbour; and Dearborn, left without the fleet, had moved on slowly and disjointedly, in rear of Vincent, with whom he did not regain touch for a week. On June 5 the Americans camped at Stoney Creek, five miles from the site of Hamilton. The steep zigzagging bank of the creek, which formed their front, was about twenty feet high. Their right rested on a mile-wide swamp, which ran down to Lake Ontario. Their left touched the

Heights, which ran from Burlington to Queenston. They were also in superior numbers, and ought to have been quite secure. But they thought so much more of pursuit than of defence that they were completely taken by surprise when '704 firelocks' under Colonel Harvey suddenly attacked them just after midnight. Harvey, chief staff officer to Vincent, was a first-rate leader for such daring work as this, and his men were all well disciplined. But the whole enterprise might have failed, for all that. Some of the men opened fire too soon, and the nearest Americans began to stand to their arms. But, while Harvey ran along re-forming the line, Major Plenderleath, with some of Brock's old regiment, the 49th, charged straight into the American centre, took the guns there, and caused so much confusion that Harvey's following charge carried all before it. Next morning, June 6, the Americans began a retreat which was hastened by Yeo's arrival on their lakeward flank, by the Indians on the Heights, and by Vincent's reinforcements in their rear. Not till they reached the shelter of Fort George did they attempt to make a stand.

The two armies now faced each other astride

SIR JAMES YEO'S FLAGSHIP, 1814

The vessel carried 1000 men and 102 guns. It was 190 feet in the keel and 60 feet in the beam, and had a draught of 23 feet

From the John Ross Robertson Collection, Toronto Public Library

of the lake-shore road and the Heights. The British left advanced post, between Ten and Twelve Mile Creeks, was under Major de Haren of the 104th, a regiment which, in the preceding winter, had marched on snow-shoes through the woods all the way from the middle of New Brunswick to Quebec. The corresponding British post inland, near the Beaver Dams, was under Lieutenant FitzGibbon of the 49th, a cool, quick-witted, and adventurous Irishman, who had risen from the ranks by his own good qualities and Brock's recommendation. Between him and the Americans at Queenston and St David's was a picked force of Indian scouts with a son of the great chief Joseph Brant. These Indians never gave the Americans a minute's rest. They were up at all hours, pressing round the flanks, sniping the sentries, worrying the outposts, and keeping four times their own numbers on the perpetual alert. What exasperated the Americans even more was the wonderfully elusive way in which the Indians would strike their blow and then be lost to sight and sound the very next moment, if, indeed, they ever were seen at all. Finally, this endless skirmish with an invisible foe became so harassing that the Americans sent out a flying column of six

hundred picked men under Colonel Boerstler on June 24 to break up FitzGibbon's post at the Beaver Dams and drive the Indians out of the intervening bush altogether.

But the American commanders had not succeeded in hiding their preparations from the vigilant eyes of the Indian scouts or from the equally attentive ears of Laura Secord, the wife of an ardent U. E. Loyalist, James Secord, who was still disabled by the wounds he had received when fighting under Brock's command at Queenston Heights. Early in the morning of the 23rd, while Laura Secord was going out to milk the cows, she overheard some Americans talking about the surprise in store for FitzGibbon next day. Without giving the slightest sign she quietly drove the cattle in behind the nearest fence, hid her milk-pail, and started to thread her perilous way through twenty miles of bewildering bypaths to the Beaver Dams. Keeping off the beaten tracks and always in the shadow of the full-leaved trees, she stole along through the American lines, crossed the no-man's-land between the two desperate enemies, and managed to get inside the ever-shifting fringe of Indian scouts without being seen by friend or foe. The heat was intense;

and the whole forest steamed with it after the tropical rain. But she held her course without a pause, over the swollen streams on fallen tree-trunks, through the dense underbrush, and in and out of the mazes of the forest, where a bullet might come from either side without a moment's warning. As she neared the end of her journey a savage yell told her she was at last discovered by the Indians. She and they were on the same side; but she had hard work to persuade them that she only wished to warn FitzGibbon. Then came what, to a lesser patriot, would have been a crowning disappointment. For when, half dead with fatigue, she told him her story, she found he had already heard it from the scouts. But just because this forestalment was no real disappointment to her, it makes her the Anglo-Canadian heroine whose fame for bravery in war is worthiest of being remembered with that of her French-Canadian sister, Madeleine de Verchères.[1]

Boerstler's six hundred had only ten miles to go in a straight line. But all the thickets, woods, creeks, streams, and swamps were closely beset by a body of expert, persistent

[1] For Madeleine de Verchères see *The Fighting Governor* in this Series.

Indians, who gradually increased from two hundred and fifty to four hundred men. The Americans became discouraged and bewildered; and when FitzGibbon rode up at the head of his redcoats they were ready to give in. The British posts were all in excellent touch with each other; and de Haren arrived in time to receive the actual surrender. He was closely followed by the 2nd Lincoln Militia under Colonel Clark, and these again by Colonel Bisshopp with the whole of the advanced guard. But it was the Indians alone who won the fight, as FitzGibbon generously acknowledged: 'Not a shot was fired on our side by any but the Indians. They beat the American detachment into a state of terror, and the only share I claim is taking advantage of a favourable moment to offer protection from the tomahawk and scalping knife.'

June was a lucky month for the British at sea as well as on the land; and its 'Glorious First,' so called after Howe's victory nineteen years before, now became doubly glorious in a way which has a special interest for Canada. The American frigate *Chesapeake* was under orders to attack British supply-ships entering Canadian waters; and the victorious British frigate *Shannon* was taken out of action and

THE *SHANNON* AND THE *CHESAPEAKE* IN HALIFAX HARBOUR, 1813

Drawn under the direction of Lieut. Falkner of the *Shannon*

Print in the John Ross Robertson Collection, Toronto Public Library

into a Canadian port by a young Canadian in the Royal Navy.

The *Chesapeake* had a new captain, Lawrence, with new young officers. She carried fifty more men than the British frigate *Shannon*. But many of her ship's company were new to her, on recommissioning in May; and some were comparatively untrained for service on board a man-of-war. The frigates themselves were practically equal in size and armament. But Captain Broke had been in continuous command of the *Shannon* for seven years and had trained his crew into the utmost perfection of naval gunnery. The vessels met off Boston in full view of many thousands of spectators. Not one British shot flew high. Every day in the *Shannon's* seven years of preparation told in that fight of only fifteen minutes; and when Broke led his boarders over the *Chesapeake's* side her fate had been sealed already. The Stars and Stripes were soon replaced by the Union Jack. Then, with Broke severely wounded and his first lieutenant killed, the command fell on Lieutenant Wallis, who sailed both vessels into Halifax. This young Canadian, afterwards known as Admiral-of-the-Fleet Sir Provo Wallis, lived to become the longest of all

human links between the past and present of the Navy. He was by far the last survivor of those officers who were specially exempted from technical retirement on account of having held any ship or fleet command during the Great War that ended on the field of Waterloo. He was born before Napoleon had been heard of. He went through a battle before the death of Nelson. He outlived Wellington by forty years. His name stood on the Active List for all but the final decade of the nineteenth century. And, as an honoured centenarian, he is vividly remembered by many who were still called young a century after the battle that brought him into fame.

The summer campaign on the Niagara frontier ended with three minor British successes. Fort Schlosser was surprised on July 5. On the 11th Bisshopp lost his life in destroying Black Rock. And on August 24 the Americans were driven in under the guns of Fort George. After this there was a lull which lasted throughout the autumn.

Down by the Montreal frontier there were three corresponding British successes. On June 3 Major Taylor of the 100th captured

two American gunboats, the *Growler* and the *Eagle*, which had come to attack Isle-aux-Noix in the Richelieu river, and renamed them the *Broke* and the *Shannon*. Early in August Captains Pring and Everard, of the Navy, and Colonel Murray with nine hundred soldiers, raided Lake Champlain. They destroyed the barracks, yard, and stores at Plattsburg and sent the American militia flying home. But a still more effective blow was struck on the opposite side of Lake Champlain, at Burlington, where General Hampton was preparing the right wing of his new army of invasion. Stores, equipment, barracks, and armaments were destroyed to such an extent that Hampton's preparations were set back till late in the autumn. The left wing of the same army was at Sackett's Harbour, under Dearborn's successor, General Wilkinson, whose plan was to take Kingston, go down the St Lawrence, meet Hampton, who was to come up from the south, and then make a joint attack with him on Montreal.

In September the scene of action shifted to the West, where the British were trying to keep the command of Lake Erie, while the Americans were trying to wrest it from them. Captain Oliver Perry, a first-rate American

naval officer of only twenty-eight, was at Presqu'isle (now Erie) completing his flotilla. He had his troubles, of course, especially with the militia garrison, who would not do their proper tour of duty. 'I tell the boys to go, but the boys won't go,' was the only report forthcoming from one of several worthless colonels. A still greater trouble for Perry was getting his vessels over the bar. This had to be done without any guns on board, and with the cumbrous aid of 'camels,' which are any kind of air-tanks made fast to the sides low down, in order to raise the hull as much as possible. But, luckily for Perry, his opponent, Captain Barclay of the Royal Navy, an energetic and capable young officer of thirty-two, was called upon to face worse troubles still. Barclay was, indeed, the first to get afloat. But he had to give up the blockade of Presqu'isle, and so let Perry out, because he had the rawest of crews, the scantiest of equipment, and nothing left to eat. Then, when he ran back to Amherstburg, he found Procter also facing a state of semi-starvation, while thousands of Indian families were clamouring for food. Thus there was no other choice but either to fight or starve; for there was not the slightest chance of re-

plenishing stores unless the line of the lake was clear.

So Barclay sailed out with his six little British vessels, armed by the odds and ends of whatever ordnance could be spared from Amherstburg and manned by almost any crews but sailors. Even the flagship *Detroit* had only ten real seamen, all told. Ammunition was likewise very scarce, and so defective that the guns had to be fired by the flash of a pistol. Perry also had a makeshift flotilla, partly manned by drafts from Harrison's army. But, on the whole, the odds in his favour were fairly shown by the number of vessels in the respective flotillas, nine American against the British six.

Barclay had only thirty miles to make in a direct south-easterly line from Amherstburg to reach Perry at Put-in Bay in the Bass Islands, where, on the morning of September 10, the opposing forces met. The battle raged for two hours at the very closest quarters till Perry's flagship *Lawrence* struck to Barclay's own *Detroit*. But Perry had previously left the *Lawrence* for the fresh *Niagara*; and he now bore down on the battered *Detroit*, which had meanwhile fallen foul of the only other sizable British vessel, the *Queen Charlotte*.

This was fatal for Barclay. The whole British flotilla surrendered after a desperate resistance and an utterly disabling loss. From that time on to the end of the war Lake Erie remained completely under American control.

Procter could hardly help seeing that he was doomed to give up the whole Lake Erie region. But he lingered and was lost. While Harrison was advancing with overwhelming numbers Procter was still trying to decide when and how to abandon Amherstburg. Then, when he did go, he carried with him an inordinate amount of baggage; and he retired so slowly that Harrison caught and crushed him near Moravian Town, beside the Thames, on the 5th of October. Harrison had three thousand exultant Americans in action; Procter had barely a thousand worn-out, dispirited men, more than half of them Indians under Tecumseh. The redcoats, spread out in single rank at open order, were ridden down by Harrison's cavalry, backed by the mass of his infantry. The Indians on the inland flank stood longer and fought with great determination against five times their numbers till Tecumseh fell. Then they broke and fled. This was their last great fight and Tecumseh was their last great leader.

The scene now shifts once more to the Montreal frontier, which was being threatened by the converging forces of Hampton from the south and Wilkinson from the west. Each had about seven thousand men; and their common objective was the island of Montreal. Hampton crossed the line at Odelltown on September 20. But he presently moved back again; and it was not till October 21 that he began his definite attack by advancing down the left bank of the Châteauguay, after opening communications with Wilkinson, who was still near Sackett's Harbour. Hampton naturally expected to brush aside all the opposition that could be made by the few hundred British between him and the St Lawrence. But de Salaberry, the commander of the British advanced posts, determined to check him near La Fourche, where several little tributaries of the Châteauguay made a succession of good positions, if strengthened by abattis and held by trained defenders.

The British force was very small when Hampton began his slow advance; but 'Red George' Macdonell marched to help it just in time. Macdonell was commanding a crack corps of French Canadians, all picked from the best 'Select Embodied Militia,' and now,

at the end of six months of extra service, as good as a battalion of regulars. He had hurried to Kingston when Wilkinson had threatened it from Sackett's Harbour. Now he was urgently needed at Châteauguay. 'When can you start?' asked Prevost, who was himself on the point of leaving Kingston for Châteauguay. 'Directly the men have finished their dinners, sir!' 'Then follow me as quickly as you can!' said Prevost as he stepped on board his vessel. There were 210 miles to go. A day was lost in collecting boats enough for this sudden emergency. Another day was lost *en route* by a gale so terrific that even the French-Canadian voyageurs were unable to face it. The rapids, where so many of Amherst's men had been drowned in 1760, were at their very worst; and the final forty miles had to be made overland by marching all night through dense forest and along a particularly difficult trail. Yet Macdonell got into touch with de Salaberry long before Prevost, to whom he had the satisfaction of reporting later in the day: 'All correct and present, sir; not one man missing!'

The advanced British forces under de Salaberry were now, on October 25, the eve

of battle, occupying the left, or north, bank of the Châteauguay, fifteen miles south of the Cascade Rapids of the St Lawrence, twenty-five miles south-west of Caughnawaga, and thirty-five miles south-west of Montreal. Immediately in rear of these men under de Salaberry stood Macdonell's command; while, in more distant support, nearer to Montreal, stood various posts under General de Watteville, with whom Prevost spent that night and most of the 26th, the day on which the battle was fought.

As Hampton came on with his cumbrous American thousands de Salaberry felt justifiable confidence in his own well-disciplined French-Canadian hundreds. He and his brothers were officers in the Imperial Army. His Voltigeurs were regulars. The supporting Fencibles were also regulars, and of ten years' standing. Macdonell's men were practically regulars. The so-called 'Select Militia' present had been permanently embodied for eighteen months; and the only real militiamen on the scene of action, most of whom never came under fire at all, had already been twice embodied for service in the field. The British total present was 1590, of whom less than a quarter were militiamen and Indians.

But the whole firing line comprised no more than 460, of whom only 66 were militiamen and only 22 were Indians. The Indian total was about one-tenth of the whole. The English-speaking total was about one-twentieth. It is therefore perfectly right to say that the battle of Châteauguay was practically fought and won by French-Canadian regulars against American odds of four to one.

De Salaberry's position was peculiar. The head of his little column faced the head of Hampton's big column on a narrow front, bounded on his own left by the river Châteauguay and on his own right by woods, into which Hampton was afraid to send his untrained men. But, crossing a right-angled bend of the river, beyond de Salaberry's left front, was a ford, while in rear of de Salaberry's own column was another ford which Hampton thought he could easily take with fifteen hundred men under Purdy, as he had no idea of Macdonell's march and no doubt of being able to crush de Salaberry's other troops between his own five thousand attacking from the front and Purdy's fifteen hundred attacking from the rear. Purdy advanced overnight, crossed to the right bank of the Châteauguay, by the ford clear of de Sala-

CHARLES DE SALABERRY

From a portrait in the Dominion Archives

berry's front, and made towards the ford in de Salaberry's rear. But his men lost their way in the dark and found themselves, not in rear of, but opposite to, and on the left flank of, de Salaberry's column in the morning. They drove in two of de Salaberry's companies, which were protecting his left flank on the right, or what was now Purdy's, side of the river; but they were checked by a third, which Macdonell sent forward, across the rear ford, at the same time that he occupied this rear ford himself. Purdy and Hampton had now completely lost touch with one another. Purdy was astounded to see Macdonell's main body of redcoats behind the rear ford. He paused, waiting for support from Hampton, who was still behind the front ford. Hampton paused, waiting for him to take the rear ford, now occupied by Macdonell. De Salaberry mounted a huge tree-stump and at once saw his opportunity. Holding back Hampton's crowded column with his own front, which fought under cover of his first abattis, he wheeled the rest of his men into line to the left and thus took Purdy in flank. Macdonell was out of range behind the rear ford; but he played his part by making his buglers sound the advance from several

different quarters, while his men, joined by de Salaberry's militiamen and by the Indians in the bush, cheered vociferously and raised the war-whoop. This was too much for Purdy's fifteen hundred. They broke in confusion, ran away from the river into the woods under a storm of bullets, fired into each other, and finally disappeared. Hampton's attack on de Salaberry's first abattis then came to a full stop; after which the whole American army retired beaten from the field.

Ten days after Châteauguay dilatory Wilkinson, tired of waiting for defeated Hampton, left the original rendezvous at French Creek, fifty miles below Sackett's Harbour. Like Dearborn in 1812, he began his campaign just as the season was closing. But, again like Dearborn, he had the excuse of being obliged to organize his army in the middle of the war. Four days later again, on November 9, Brown, the successful defender of Sackett's Harbour against Prevost's attack in May, was landed at Williamsburg, on the Canadian side, with two thousand men, to clear the twenty miles down to Cornwall, opposite the rendezvous at St Regis, where Wilkinson expected to find Hampton ready to join him for the combined attack on Montreal.

But Brown had to reckon with Dennis, the first defender of Queenston, who now commanded the little garrison of Cornwall, and who disputed every inch of the way by breaking the bridges and resisting each successive advance till Brown was compelled to deploy for attack. Two days were taken up with these harassing manœuvres, during which another two thousand Americans were landed at Williamsburg under Boyd, who immediately found himself still more harassed in rear than Brown had been in front.

This new British force in Boyd's rear was only a thousand strong; but, as it included every human element engaged in the defence of Canada, it has a quite peculiar interest of its own. Afloat, it included bluejackets of the Royal Navy, men of the Provincial Marine, French-Canadian voyageurs, and Anglo-Canadian boatmen from the trading-posts, all under a first-rate fighting seaman, Captain Mulcaster, R.N. Ashore, under a good regimental leader, Colonel Morrison—whose chief staff officer was Harvey, of Stoney Creek renown—it included Imperial regulars, Canadian regulars of both races, French-Canadian and Anglo-Canadian militiamen, and a party of Indians.

Early on the 11th Brown had arrived at

Cornwall with his two thousand Americans, Wilkinson was starting down from Williamsburg in boats with three thousand more, and Boyd was starting down ashore with eighteen hundred. But Mulcaster's vessels pressed in on Wilkinson's rear, while Morrison pressed in on Boyd's. Wilkinson then ordered Boyd to turn about and drive off Morrison, while he hurried his own men out of reach of Mulcaster, whose armed vessels could not follow down the rapids. Boyd thereupon attacked Morrison, and a stubborn fight ensued at Chrystler's Farm. The field was of the usual type: woods on one flank, water on the other, and a more or less flat clearing in the centre. Boyd tried hard to drive his wedge in between the British and the river. But Morrison foiled him in manœuvre; and the eight hundred British stood fast against their eighteen hundred enemies all along the line. Boyd then withdrew, having lost four hundred men; and Morrison's remaining six hundred effectives slept on their hard-won ground.

Next morning the energetic Morrison resumed his pursuit. But the campaign against Montreal was already over. Wilkinson had found that Hampton had started back for Lake Champlain while the battle was in pro-

gress; so he landed at St Regis, just inside his own country, and went into winter quarters at French Mills on the Salmon river.

In December the scene of strife changed back again to the Niagara, where the American commander, M'Clure, decided to evacuate Fort George. At dusk on the 10th he ordered four hundred women and children to be turned out of their homes at Newark into the biting midwinter cold, and then burnt the whole settlement down to the ground. If he had intended to hold the position he might have been justified in burning Newark, under more humane conditions, because this village undoubtedly interfered with the defensive fire of Fort George. But, as he was giving up Fort George, his act was an entirely wanton deed of shame.

Meanwhile the new British general, Gordon Drummond, second in ability to Brock alone, was hurrying to the Niagara frontier. He was preceded by Colonel Murray, who took possession of Fort George on the 12th, the day M'Clure crossed the Niagara river. Murray at once made a plan to take the American Fort Niagara opposite; and Drummond at once approved it for immediate execution. On

the night of the 18th six hundred men were landed on the American side three miles up the river. At four the next morning Murray led them down to the fort, rushing the sentries and pickets by the way with the bayonet in dead silence. He then told off two hundred men to take a bastion at the same time that he was to lead the other four hundred straight through the main gate, which he knew would soon be opened to let the reliefs pass out. Everything worked to perfection. When the reliefs came out they were immediately charged and bayoneted, as were the first astonished men off duty who ran out of their quarters to see what the matter was. A stiff hand-to-hand fight followed. But every American attempt to form was instantly broken up; and presently the whole place surrendered. Drummond, who was delighted with such an excellent beginning, took care to underline the four significant words referring to the enemy's killed and wounded—*all with the bayonet.* This was done in no mere vulgar spirit of bravado, still less in abominable bloody-mindedness. It was the soldierly recognition of a particularly gallant feat of arms, carried out with such conspicuously good discipline that its memory is

SIR GORDON DRUMMOND

From the John Ross Robertson Collection, Toronto Public Library

cherished, even to the present day, by the 100th, afterwards raised again as the Royal Canadians, and now known as the Prince of Wales's Leinster regiment. A facsimile of Drummond's underlined order is one of the most highly honoured souvenirs in the officers' mess.

Not a moment was lost in following up this splendid feat of arms. The Indians drove the American militia out of Lewiston, which the advancing redcoats burnt to the ground. Fort Schlosser fell next, then Black Rock, and finally Buffalo. Each was laid in ashes. Thus, before 1813 ended, the whole American side of the Niagara was nothing but one long, bare line of blackened desolation, with the sole exception of Fort Niagara, which remained secure in British hands until the war was over.

CHAPTER VI

1814: LUNDY'S LANE, PLATTSBURG, AND THE GREAT BLOCKADE

In the closing phase of the struggle by land and sea the fortunes of war may, with the single exception of Plattsburg, be most conveniently followed territorially, from one point to the next, along the enormous irregular curve of five thousand miles which was the scene of operations. This curve begins at Prairie du Chien, where the Wisconsin joins the Mississippi, and ends at New Orleans, where the Mississippi is about to join the sea. It runs easterly along the Wisconsin, across to the Fox, into Lake Michigan, across to Mackinaw, eastwards through Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario, down the St Lawrence, round to Halifax, round from there to Maine, and thence along the whole Atlantic coast, south and west-about into the Gulf of Mexico.

The blockade of the Gulf of Mexico was an integral part of the British plan. But the

battle of New Orleans, which was a complete disaster for the British arms, stands quite outside the actual war, since it was fought on January 8, 1815, more than two weeks after the terms of peace had been settled by the Treaty of Ghent. This peculiarity about its date, taken in conjunction with its extreme remoteness from the Canadian frontier, puts it beyond the purview of the present chronicle.

All the decisive actions of the campaign proper were fought within two months. They began at Prairie du Chien in July and ended at Plattsburg in September. Plattsburg is the one exception to the order of place. The tide of war and British fortune flowed east and south to reach its height at Washington in August. It turned at Plattsburg in September.

Neither friend nor foe went west in 1813. But in April 1814 Colonel M'Douall set out with ninety men, mostly of the Newfoundland regiment, to reinforce Mackinaw. He started from the little depot which had been established on the Nottawasaga, a river flowing into the Georgian Bay and accessible by the overland trail from York.

After surmounting the many difficulties of

the inland route which he had to take in order to avoid the Americans in the Lake Erie region, and after much hard work against the Lake Huron ice, he at last reached Mackinaw on the 18th of May. Some good fighting Indians joined him there; and towards the end of June he felt strong enough to send Colonel M'Kay against the American post at Prairie du Chien. M'Kay arrived at this post in the middle of July and captured the whole position—fort, guns, garrison, and a vessel on the Mississippi.

Meanwhile seven hundred Americans under Croghan, the American officer who had repulsed Procter at Fort Stephenson the year before, were making for Mackinaw itself. They did some private looting at the Sault, burnt the houses at St Joseph's Island, and landed in full force at Mackinaw on the 4th of August. M'Douall had less than two hundred men, Indians included. But he at once marched out to the attack and beat the Americans back to their ships, which immediately sailed away. The British thenceforth commanded the whole three western lakes until the war was over.

The Lake Erie region remained quite as decisively commanded by the Americans. They

actually occupied only the line of the Detroit. But they had the power to cut any communications which the British might try to establish along the north side of the lake. They had suffered a minor reverse at Chatham in the previous December. But in March they more than turned the tables by defeating Basden's attack in the Longwoods at Delaware, near London; and in October seven hundred of their mounted men raided the line of the Thames and only just stopped short of the Grand River, the western boundary of the Niagara peninsula.

The Niagara frontier, as before, was the scene of desperate strife. The Americans were determined to wrest it from the British, and they carefully trained their best troops for the effort. Their prospects seemed bright, as the whole of Upper Canada was suffering from want of men and means, both civil and military. Drummond, the British commander-in-chief there, felt very anxious not only about the line of the Niagara but even about the neck of the whole peninsula, from Burlington westward to Lake Erie. He had no more than 4400 troops, all told; and he was obliged to place them so as to be ready for an attack either from the Niagara or

from Lake Erie, or from both together. Keeping his base at York with a thousand men, he formed his line with its right on Burlington and its left on Fort Niagara. He had 500 men at Burlington, 1000 at Fort George, and 700 at Fort Niagara. The rest were thrown well forward, so as to get into immediate touch with any Americans advancing from the south. There were 300 men at Queenston, 500 at Chippawa, 150 at Fort Erie, and 250 at Long Point on Lake Erie.

Brown, the American general who had beaten Prevost at Sackett's Harbour and who had now superseded Wilkinson, had made his advanced field base at Buffalo. His total force was not much more than Drummond's. But it was all concentrated into a single striking body which possessed the full initiative of manœuvre and attack. On July 3 Brown crossed the Niagara to the Canadian side. The same day he took Fort Erie from its little garrison; and at once began to make it a really formidable work, as the British found out to their cost later on. Next day he advanced down the river road to Street's Creek. On hearing this, General Riall, Drummond's second-in-command, gathered two thousand men and advanced against Brown, who had

recommenced his own advance with four thousand. They met on the 5th, between Street's Creek and the Chippawa river. Riall at once sent six hundred men, including all his Indians and militia, against more than twice their number of American militia, who were in a strong position on the inland flank. The Canadians went forward in excellent style and the Americans broke and fled in wild confusion. Seizing such an apparently good chance, Riall then attacked the American regulars with his own, though the odds he had to face here were more than three against two. The opposing lines met face to face unflinchingly. The Americans, who had now been trained and disciplined by proper leaders, refused to yield an inch. Their two regular brigadiers, Winfield Scott and Ripley, kept them well in hand, manœuvred their surplus battalions to the best advantage, overlapped the weaker British flank, and won the day. The British loss was five hundred, or one in four: the American four hundred, or only one in ten.

Brown then turned Riall's flank, by crossing the Chippawa higher up, and prepared for the crowning triumph of crushing Drummond. He proposed a joint attack with Chauncey on

Forts Niagara and George. But Chauncey happened to be ill at the time; he had not yet defeated Yeo; and he strongly resented being made apparently subordinate to Brown. So the proposed combination failed at the critical moment. But, for the eighteen days between the battle of Chippawa on the 5th of July and Brown's receipt of Chauncey's refusal on the 23rd, the Americans carried all before them, right up to the British line that ran along the western end of Lake Ontario, from Fort Niagara to Burlington. During this period no great operations took place. But two minor incidents served to exasperate feelings on both sides. Eight Canadian traitors were tried and hanged at Ancaster near Burlington; and Loyalists openly expressed their regret that Willcocks and others had escaped the same fate. Willcocks had been the ringleader of the parliamentary opposition to Brock in 1812; and had afterwards been exceedingly active on the American side, harrying every Loyalist he and his raiders could lay their hands on. He ended by cheating the gallows, after all, as he fell in a skirmish towards the end of the present campaign on the Niagara frontier. The other exasperating incident was the burning of St David's on

July 19 by a Colonel Stone; partly because it was a 'Tory village' and partly because the American militia mistakenly thought that one of their officers, Brigadier-General Swift, had been killed by a prisoner to whom he had given quarter.

When, on the 23rd of July, Brown at last received Chauncey's disappointing answer, he immediately stopped manœuvring along the lower Niagara and prepared to execute an alternative plan of marching diagonally across the Niagara peninsula straight for the British position at Burlington. To do this he concentrated at the Chippawa on the 24th. But by the time he was ready to put his plan into execution, on the morning of the 25th, he found himself in close touch with the British in his immediate front. Their advanced guard of a thousand men, under Colonel Pearson, had just taken post at Lundy's Lane, near the Falls. Their main body, under Riall, was clearing both banks of the lower Niagara. And Drummond himself had just arrived at Fort Niagara. Neither side knew the intentions of the other. But as the British were clearing the whole country up to the Falls, and as the Americans were bent on striking diagonally inland from a point beside the

Falls, it inevitably happened that each met the other at Lundy's Lane, which runs inland from the Canadian side of the Falls, at right angles to the river, and therefore between the two opposing armies.

When Drummond, hurrying across from York, landed at Fort Niagara in the early morning of the fateful 25th, he found that the orders he had sent over on the 23rd were already being carried out, though in a slightly modified form. Colonel Tucker was marching off from Fort Niagara to Lewiston, which he took without opposition. Then, first making sure that the heights beyond were also clear, he crossed over the Niagara to Queenston, where his men had dinner with those who had marched up on the Canadian side from Fort George. Immediately after dinner half the total sixteen hundred present marched back to garrison Forts George and Niagara, while the other half marched forward, up-stream, on the Canadian side, with Drummond, towards Lundy's Lane, whither Riall had preceded them with reinforcements for the advanced guard under Colonel Pearson. In the meantime Brown had heard about the taking of Lewiston, and, fearing that the British might take Fort Schlosser too, had at once

given up all idea of his diagonal march on Burlington and had decided to advance straight against Queenston instead. Thus both the American and the British main bodies were marching on Lundy's Lane from opposite sides and in successive detachments throughout that long, intensely hot, midsummer afternoon.

Presently Riall got a report saying that the Americans were advancing in one massed force instead of in successive detachments. He thereupon ordered Pearson to retire from Lundy's Lane to Queenston, sent back orders that Colonel Hercules Scott, who was marching up twelve hundred men from near St Catharine's on Twelve Mile Creek, was also to go to Queenston, and reported both these changes to Drummond, who was hurrying along the Queenston road towards Lundy's Lane as fast as he could. While the orderly officers were galloping back to Drummond and Hercules Scott, and while Pearson was getting his men into their order of march, Winfield Scott's brigade of American regulars suddenly appeared on the Chippawa road, deployed for attack, and halted. There was a pause on both sides. Winfield Scott thought he might have Drummond's whole force in front of him.

Riall thought he was faced by the whole of Brown's. But Winfield Scott, presently realizing that Pearson was unsupported, resumed his advance; while Pearson and Riall, not realizing that Winfield Scott was himself unsupported for the time being, immediately began to retire.

At this precise moment Drummond dashed up and drew rein. There was not a minute to lose. The leading Americans were coming on in excellent order, only a musket-shot away; Pearson's thousand were just in the act of giving up the key to the whole position; and Drummond's eight hundred were plodding along a mile or so in rear. But within that fleeting minute Drummond made the plan that brought on the most desperately contested battle of the war. He ordered Pearson's thousand back again. He brought his own eight hundred forward at full speed. He sent post-haste to Colonel Scott to change once more and march on Lundy's Lane. And so, by the time the astonished Americans were about to seize the key themselves, they found him ready to defend it.

Too long for a hillock, too low for a hill, this key to the whole position in that stern fight has never had a special name. But it may

well be known as Battle Rise. It stood a mile from the Niagara river, and just a step inland beyond the crossing of two roads. One of these, Lundy's Lane, ran lengthwise over it, at right angles to the Niagara. The other, which did not quite touch it, ran in the same direction as the river, all the way from Fort Erie to Fort George, and, of course, through both Chippawa and Queenston. The crest of Battle Rise was a few yards on the Chippawa side of Lundy's Lane; and there Drummond placed his seven field-guns. Round these guns the thickest of the battle raged, from first to last. The odds were four thousand Americans against three thousand British, altogether. But the British were in superior force at first; and neither side had its full total in action at any one time, as casualties and reinforcements kept the numbers fluctuating.

It was past six in the evening of that stifling 25th of July when Winfield Scott attacked with the utmost steadiness and gallantry. Though the British outnumbered his splendid brigade, and though they had the choice of ground as well, he still succeeded in driving a wedge through their left flank, a move which threatened to break them away from the road along the river. But they retired in good

order, re-formed, and then drove out his wedge.

By half-past seven the American army had all come into action, and Drummond was having hard work to hold his own. Brown, like Winfield Scott, at once saw the supreme importance of taking Battle Rise; so he sent two complete battalions against it, one of regulars leading, the other, of militia, in support. At the first salvo from Drummond's seven guns the American militia broke and ran away. But Colonel Miller worked some of the American regulars very cleverly along the far side of a creeper-covered fence, while the rest engaged the battery from a distance. In the heat of action the British artillerymen never saw their real danger till, on a given signal, Miller's advanced party all sprang up and fired a point-blank volley which killed or wounded every man beside the guns. Then Miller charged and took the battery. But he only held it for a moment. The British centre charged up their own side of Battle Rise and drove the intruders back, after a terrific struggle with the bayonet. But again success was only for the moment. The Americans rallied and pressed the British back. The British then rallied and returned. And so

the desperate fight swayed back and forth across the coveted position; till finally both sides retired exhausted, and the guns stood dumb between them.

It was now pitch-dark, and the lull that followed seemed almost like the end of the fight. But, after a considerable pause, the Americans—all regulars this time—came on once more. This put the British in the greatest danger. Drummond had lost nearly a third of his men. The effective American regulars were little less than double his present twelve hundred effectives of all kinds and were the fresher army of the two. Miller had taken one of the guns from Battle Rise. The other six could not be served against close-quarter musketry; and the nearest Americans were actually resting between the cross-roads and the deserted Rise. Defeat looked certain for the British. But, just as the attackers and defenders began to stir again, Colonel Hercules Scott's twelve hundred weary reinforcements came plodding along the Queenston road, wheeled round the corner into Lundy's Lane, and stumbled in among these nearest Americans, who, being the more expectant of the two, drove them back in confusion. The officers, however,

rallied the men at once. Drummond told off eight hundred of them, including three hundred militia, to the reserve; prolonged his line to the right with the rest; and thus re-established the defence.

Hardly had the new arrivals taken breath before the final assault began. Again the Americans took the silent battery. Again the British drove them back. Again the opposing lines swayed to and fro across the deadly crest of Battle Rise, with nothing else to guide them through the hot, black night but their own flaming musketry. The Americans could not have been more gallant and persistent in attack: the British could not have been more steadfast in defence. Midnight came; but neither side could keep its hold on Battle Rise. By this time Drummond was wounded; and Riall was both wounded and a prisoner. Among the Americans Brown and Winfield Scott were also wounded, while their men were worn out after being under arms for nearly eighteen hours. A pause of sheer exhaustion followed. Then, slowly and sullenly, as if they knew the one more charge they could not make must carry home, the foiled Americans turned back and felt their way to Chippawa.

The British ranks lay down in the same order as that in which they fought; and a deep hush fell over the whole, black-shrouded battlefield. The immemorial voice of those dread Falls to which no combatant gave heed for six long hours of mortal strife was heard once more. But near at hand there was no other sound than that which came from the whispered queries of a few tired officers on duty; from the busy orderlies and surgeons at their work of mercy; and from the wounded moaning in their pain. So passed the quiet half of that short, momentous, summer night. Within four hours the sun shone down on the living and the dead—on that silent battery whose gunners had fallen to a man—on the unconquered Rise.

The tide of war along the Niagara frontier favoured neither side for some time after Lundy's Lane, though the Americans twice appeared to be regaining the initiative. On August 15 there was a well-earned American victory at Fort Erie, where Drummond's assault was beaten off with great loss to the British. A month later an American sortie was repulsed. On September 21 Drummond retired beaten; and on October 13 he found

himself again on the defensive at Chippawa, with little more than three thousand men, while Izard, who had come with American reinforcements from Lake Champlain and Sackett's Harbour, was facing him with twice as many. But Yeo's fleet had now come up to the mouth of the Niagara, while Chauncey's had remained at Sackett's Harbour. Thus the British had the priceless advantage of a movable naval base at hand, while the Americans had none at all within supporting distance. Every step towards Lake Ontario hampered Izard more and more, while it added corresponding strength to Drummond. An American attempt to work round Drummond's flank, twelve miles inland, was also foiled by a heavy skirmish on October 19 at Cook's Mills; and Izard's definite abandonment of the invasion was announced on November 5 by his blowing up Fort Erie and retiring into winter quarters. This ended the war along the whole Niagara.

The campaign on Lake Ontario was very different. It opened two months earlier. The naval competition consisted rather in building than in fighting. The British built ships in Kingston, the Americans in Sackett's Harbour; and reports of progress soon

travelled across the intervening space of less than forty miles. The initiative of combined operations by land and water was undertaken by the British instead of by the Americans. Yeo and Drummond wished to attack Sackett's Harbour with four thousand men. But Prevost said he could spare them only three thousand; whereupon they changed their objective to Oswego, which they took, in excellent style, on May 6. The British suffered a serious reverse, though on a very much smaller scale, on May 30, at Sandy Creek, between Oswego and Sackett's Harbour, when a party of marines and bluejackets, sent to cut out some vessels with naval stores for Chauncey, was completely lost, every man being either killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.

From Lake Ontario down to the sea the Canadian frontier was never seriously threatened; and the only action of any consequence was fought to the south of Montreal in the early spring. On March 30 the Americans made a last inglorious attempt in this direction. Wilkinson started with four thousand men to follow the line of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu river, the same that was tried by Dearborn in 1812 and by Hampton in 1813. At La Colle, only four miles across the frontier,

he attacked Major Handcock's post of two hundred men. The result was like a second Châteauguay. Handcock drew in three hundred reinforcements and two gunboats from Isle-aux-Noix. Wilkinson's advanced guard lost its way overnight. In the morning he lacked the resolution to press on, even with his overwhelming numbers; and so, after a part of his army had executed some disjointed manœuvres, he withdrew the whole and gave up in despair.

From this point of the Canadian frontier to the very end of the five-thousand-mile loop, that is, from Montreal to Mexico, the theatre of operations was directly based upon the sea, where the British Navy was by this time undisputedly supreme. A very few small American men-of-war were still at large, together with a much greater number of privateers. But they had no power whatever even to mitigate the irresistible blockade of the whole coast-line of the United States. American seaborne commerce simply died away; for no mercantile marine could have any independent life when its trade had to be carried on by a constantly decreasing tonnage, when, too, it could go to sea at all only by furtive evasion,

and when it had to take cargo at risks so great that they could not be covered either by insurance or by any attainable profits. The Atlantic being barred by this Great Blockade, and the Pacific being inaccessible, the only practical way left open to American trade was through the British lines by land or sea. Some American seamen shipped in British vessels. Some American ships sailed under British colours. But the chief external American trade was done illicitly, by 'underground,' with the British West Indies and with Canada itself. This was, of course, in direct defiance of the American government, and to the direct detriment of the United States as a nation. It was equally to the direct benefit of the British colonies in general and of Nova Scotia in particular. American harbours had never been so dull. Quebec and Halifax had never been so prosperous. American money was drained away from the warlike South and West and either concentrated in the Northern States —which were opposed to the war—or paid over into British hands.

Nor was this all. The British Navy harried the coast in every convenient quarter and made effective the work of two most important joint attacks, one on Maine, the other

on Washington itself. The attack on Maine covered two months, altogether, from July 11 to September 11. It began with the taking of Moose Island by Sir Thomas Hardy, Nelson's old flag-captain at Trafalgar, and ended with the surrender, at Machias, of 'about 100 miles of sea-coast,' together with 'that intermediate tract of country which separates the province of New Brunswick from Lower Canada.' On September 21 Sir John Sherbrooke proclaimed at Halifax the formal annexation of 'all the eastern side of the Penobscot river and all the country lying between the same river and the boundary of New Brunswick.'

The attack on Maine was meant, in one sense at least, to create a partial counterpoise to the American preponderance on Lake Erie. The attack on Washington was made in retaliation for the burning of the old and new capitals of Upper Canada, Newark and York.

The naval defence of Washington had been committed to Commodore Barney, a most expert and gallant veteran of the Revolution, who handled his wholly inadequate little force with consummate skill and daring, both afloat and ashore. He was not, strictly speaking, a naval officer, but a privateersman who had made the unique record of taking

eleven prizes in ten consecutive days with his famous Baltimore schooner *Rossie*. The military defence was committed to General Winder, one of the two generals captured by Harvey's '704 firelocks' at Stoney Creek the year before. Winder was a good soldier and did his best in the seven weeks at his disposal. But the American government, which had now enjoyed continuous party power for no less than thirteen years, gave him no more than four hundred regulars, backed by Barney's four hundred excellent seamen and the usual array of militia, with whom to defend the capital in the third campaign of a war they had themselves declared. There were 93,500 militiamen within the threatened area. But only fifteen thousand were got under arms; and only five thousand were brought into action.

In the middle of August the British fleet under Admirals Cochrane and Cockburn sailed into Chesapeake Bay with a detachment of four thousand troops commanded by General Ross. Barney had no choice but to retire before this overwhelming force. As the British advanced up the narrowing waters all chance of escape disappeared; so Barney burnt his boats and little vessels and marched his seamen in to join Winder's army. On August 24

Winder's whole six thousand drew up in an exceedingly strong position at Bladensburg, just north of Washington; and the President rode out with his Cabinet to see a battle which is best described by its derisive title of the Bladensburg Races. Ross's four thousand came on and were received by an accurate checking fire from the regular artillery and from Barney's seamen gunners. But a total loss of 8 killed and 11 wounded was more than the 5000 American militia could stand. All the rest ran for dear life. The deserted handful of regular soldiers and sailors was then overpowered; while Barney was severely wounded and taken prisoner. He and they, however, had saved their honour and won the respect and admiration of both friend and foe. Ross and Cockburn at once congratulated him on the stand he had made against them; and he, with equal magnanimity, reported officially that the British had treated him 'just like a brother.'

That night the little British army of four thousand men burnt governmental Washington, the capital of a country with eight millions of people. Not a man, not a woman, not a child, was in any way molested; nor was one finger laid on any private property.

The four thousand then marched back to the fleet, through an area inhabited by 93,500 militiamen on paper, without having so much as a single musket fired at them.

Now, if ever, was Prevost's golden opportunity to end the war with a victory that would turn the scale decisively in favour of the British cause. With the one exception of Lake Erie, the British had the upper hand over the whole five thousand miles of front. A successful British counter-invasion, across the Montreal frontier, would offset the American hold on Lake Erie, ensure the control of Lake Champlain, and thus bring all the scattered parts of the campaign into their proper relation to a central, crowning triumph.

On the other hand, defeat would mean disaster. But the bare possibility of defeat seemed quite absurd when Prevost set out from his field headquarters opposite Montreal, between La Prairie and Chambly, with eleven thousand seasoned veterans, mostly 'Peninsulars,' to attack Plattsburg, which was no more than twenty-five miles across the frontier, very weakly fortified, and garrisoned only by the fifteen hundred regulars whom Izard had 'culled out' when he started for Niagara.

The naval odds were not so favourable. But, as they could be decisively affected by military action, they naturally depended on Prevost, who, with his overwhelming army, could turn them whichever way he chose. It was true that Commodore Macdonough's American flotilla had more trained seamen than Captain Downie's corresponding British force, and that his crews and vessels possessed the further advantage of having worked together for some time. Downie, a brave and skilful young officer, had arrived to take command of his flotilla at the upper end of Lake Champlain only on September 2, that is, exactly a week before Prevost urged him to attack, and nine days before the battle actually did take place. He had a fair proportion of trained seamen; but they consisted of scratch drafts from different men-of-war, chosen in haste and hurried to the front. Most of the men and officers were complete strangers to one another; and they made such short-handed crews that some soldiers had to be wheeled out of the line of march and put on board at the very last minute. There would have been grave difficulties with such a flotilla under any circumstances. But Prevost had increased them tenfold by giving

no orders and making no preparations while trying his hand at another abortive armistice —one, moreover, which he had no authority even to propose.

Yet, in spite of all this, Prevost still had the means of making Downie superior to Macdonough. Macdonough's vessels were mostly armed with carronades, Downie's with long guns. Carronades fired masses of small projectiles with great effect at very short ranges. Long guns, on the other hand, fired each a single large projectile up to the farthest ranges known. In fact, it was almost as if the Americans had been armed with shot-guns and the British armed with rifles. Therefore the Americans had an overwhelming advantage at close quarters, while the British had a corresponding advantage at long range. Now, Macdonough had anchored in an ideal position for close action inside Plattsburg Bay. He required only a few men to look after his ground tackle;[1] and his springs[2] were out on the landward side for 'winding ship,' that is, for turning his vessels completely round,

[1] Anchors and cables.

[2] Ropes to hold a vessel in position when hauling or swinging in a harbour. Here, ropes from the stern to the anchors on the landward side.

so as to bring their fresh broadsides into action. There was no sea-room for manœuvring round him with any chance of success; so the British would be at a great disadvantage while standing in to the attack, first because they could be raked end-on, next because they could only reply with bow fire —the weakest of all—and, lastly, because their best men would be engaged with the sails and anchors while their ships were taking station.

But Prevost had it fully in his power to prevent Macdonough from fighting in such an ideal position at all. Macdonough's American flotilla was well within range of Macomb's long-range American land batteries; while Prevost's overwhelming British army was easily able to take these land batteries, turn their guns on Macdonough's helpless vessels—whose short-range carronades could not possibly reply—and so either destroy the American flotilla at anchor in the bay or force it out into the open lake, where it would meet Downie's long-range guns at the greatest disadvantage. Prevost, after allowing for all other duties, had at least seven thousand veterans for an assault on Macomb's second-rate regulars and ordinary militia, both of

whom together amounted at most to thirty-five hundred, including local militiamen who had come in to reinforce the 'culls' whom Izard had left behind. The Americans, though working with very creditable zeal, determined to do their best, quite expected to be beaten out of their little forts and entrenchments, which were just across the fordable Saranac in front of Prevost's army. They had tried to delay the British advance. But, in the words of Macomb's own official report, 'so undaunted was the enemy that he never deployed in his whole march, always pressing on in column'; that is, the British veterans simply brushed the Americans aside without deigning to change from their column of march into a line of battle. Prevost's duty was therefore perfectly plain. With all the odds in his favour ashore, and with the power of changing the odds in his favour afloat, he ought to have captured Macomb's position in the early morning and turned both his own and Macomb's artillery on Macdonough, who would then have been forced to leave his moorings for the open lake, where Downie would have had eight hours of daylight to fight him at long range.

What Prevost actually did was something

disgracefully different. Having first wasted time by his attempted armistice, and so hindered preparations at the base, between La Prairie and Chambly, he next proceeded to cross the frontier too soon. He reported home that Downie could not be ready before September 15. But on August 31 he crossed the line himself, only twenty-five miles from his objective, thus prematurely showing the enemy his hand. Then he began to goad the unhappy Downie to his doom. Downie's flagship, the *Confiance*, named after a French prize which Yeo had taken, was launched only on August 25, and hauled out into the stream only on September 7. Her scratch crew could not go to battle quarters till the 8th; and the shipwrights were working madly at her up to the very moment that the first shot was fired in her fatal action on the 11th. Yet Prevost tried to force her into action on the 9th, adding, 'I need not dwell with you on the evils resulting to both services from delay,' and warning Downie that he was being watched: 'Captain Watson is directed to remain at Little Chazy until you are preparing to get under way.'

Thus watched and goaded by the governor-general and commander-in-chief, whose own

service was the Army, Downie, a comparative junior in the Navy, put forth his utmost efforts, against his better judgment, to sail that very midnight. A baffling head-wind, however, kept him from working out. He immediately reported to Prevost, giving quite satisfactory reasons. But Prevost wrote back impatiently: 'The troops have been held in readiness, since six o'clock this morning [the 10th], to storm the enemy's works at nearly the same time as the naval action begins in the bay. I ascribe the disappointment I have experienced to the unfortunate change of wind, and shall rejoice to learn that my reasonable expectations have been frustrated by no other cause.' '*No other cause.*' The innuendo, even if unintentional, was there. Downie, a junior sailor, was perhaps suspected of 'shyness' by a very senior soldier. Prevost's poison worked quickly. 'I will convince him that the Navy won't be backward,' said Downie to his second, Pring, who gave this evidence, under oath, at the subsequent court-martial. Pring, whose evidence was corroborated by that of both the first lieutenant and the master of the *Confiance*, then urged the extreme risk of engaging Macdonough inside the bay. But Downie allayed

their anxiety by telling them that Prevost had promised to storm Macomb's indefensible works simultaneously. This was not nearly so good as if Prevost had promised to defeat Macomb first and then drive Macdonough out to sea. But it was better, far better, than what actually was done.

With Prevost's written promise in his pocket Downie sailed for Plattsburg in the early morning of that fatal 11th of September. Punctually to the minute he fired his preconcerted signal outside Cumberland Head, which separated the bay from the lake. He next waited exactly the prescribed time, during which he reconnoitred Macdonough's position from a boat. Then the hour of battle came. The hammering of the shipwrights stopped at last; and the ill-starred *Confiance*, that ship which never had a chance to 'find herself,' led the little squadron into Prevost's death-trap in the bay. Every soldier and sailor now realized that the storming of the works on land ought to have been the first move, and that Prevost's idea of simultaneous action was faulty, because it meant two independent fights, with the chance of a naval disaster preceding the military success. However, Prevost was the commander-in-chief;

he had promised co-operation in his own way; and Downie was determined to show him that the Navy had stopped for '*no other cause*' than the head-wind of the day before.

Did *no other cause* than mistaken judgment affect Prevost that fatal morning? Did he intend to show Downie that a commander-in-chief could not suffer the 'disappointment' of 'holding troops in readiness' without marking his displeasure by some visible return in kind? Or was he no worse than criminally weak? His motives will never be known. But his actions throw a sinister light upon them. For when Downie sailed in to the attack Prevost did nothing whatever to help him. Betrayed, traduced, and goaded to his ruin, Downie fought a losing battle with the utmost gallantry and skill. The wind flawed and failed inside the bay, so that the *Confiance* could not reach her proper station. Yet her first broadside struck down forty men aboard the *Saratoga*. Then the *Saratoga* fired her carronades, at point-blank range, cut up the cables aboard the *Confiance*, and did great execution among the crew. In fifteen minutes Downie fell.

The battle raged two full hours longer; while the odds against the British continued

to increase. Four of their little gunboats fought as well as gunboats could. But the other seven simply ran away, like their commander afterwards when summoned for a court-martial that would assuredly have sentenced him to death. Two of the larger vessels failed to come into action properly; one went ashore, the other drifted through the American line and then hauled down her colours. Thus the battle was fought to its dire conclusion by the British *Confiance* and *Linnet* against the American *Saratoga*, *Eagle*, and *Ticonderoga*. The gunboats had little to do with the result; though the odds of all those actually engaged were greatly in favour of Macdonough. The fourth American vessel of larger size drifted out of action.

Macdonough, an officer of whom any navy in the world might well be proud, then concentrated on the stricken *Confiance* with his own *Saratoga*, greatly aided by the *Eagle*, which swung round so as to rake the *Confiance* with her fresh broadside. The *Linnet* now drifted off a little and so could not help the *Confiance*, both because the American galleys at once engaged her and because her position was bad in any case. Presently both flagships slackened fire; whereupon Mac-

donough took the opportunity of winding ship. His ground tackle was in perfect order on the far, or landward, side; so the *Saratoga* swung round quite easily. The *Confiance* now had both the *Eagle's* and the *Saratoga's* fresh carronade broadsides deluging her battered, cannon-armed broadside with showers of deadly grape. Her one last chance of keeping up a little longer was to wind ship herself. Her tackle had all been cut; but her master got out his last spare cables and tried to bring her round, while some of his toiling men fell dead at every haul. She began to wind round very slowly; and, when exactly at right angles to Macdonough, was raked completely, fore and aft. At the same time an ominous list to port, where her side was torn in over a hundred places, showed that she would sink quickly if her guns could not be run across to starboard. But more than half her mixed scratch crew had been already killed or wounded. The most desperate efforts of her few surviving officers could not prevent the confusion that followed the fearful raking she now received from both her superior opponents; and before her fresh broadside could be brought to bear she was forced to strike her flag. Then every American carronade

and gun was turned upon Pring's undaunted little *Linnet*, which kept up the hopeless fight for fifteen minutes longer; so that Prevost might yet have a chance to carry out his own operations without fear of molestation from a hostile bay.

But Prevost was in no danger of molestation. He was in perfect safety. He watched the destruction of his fleet from his secure headquarters, well inland, marched and countermarched his men about, tc make a show of action; and then, as the *Linnet* fired her last, despairing gun, he told all ranks to go to dinner.

That night he broke camp hurriedly, left all his badly wounded men behind him, and went back a great deal faster than he came. His shamed, disgusted veterans deserted in unprecedented numbers. And Macomb's astounded army found themselves the victors of an unfought field.

The American victory at Plattsburg gave the United States the absolute control of Lake Champlain; and this, reinforcing their similar control of Lake Erie, counterbalanced the British military advantages all along the Canadian frontier. The British command of the sea, the destruction of Washington, and

the occupation of Maine told heavily on the other side. These three British advantages had been won while the mother country was fighting with her right hand tied behind her back; and in all the elements of warlike strength the British Empire was vastly superior to the United States. Thus there cannot be the slightest doubt that if the British had been free to continue the war they must have triumphed. But they were not free. Europe was seething with the profound unrest that made her statesmen feel the volcano heaving under their every step during the portentous year between Napoleon's abdication and return. The mighty British Navy, the veteran British Army, could not now be sent across the sea in overwhelming force. So American diplomacy eagerly seized this chance of profiting by British needs, and took such good advantage of them that the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war on Christmas Eve, left the two opponents in much the same position towards each other as before. Neither of the main reasons for which the Americans had fought their three campaigns was even mentioned in the articles.

The war had been an unmitigated curse to

the motherland herself; and it brought the usual curses in its train all over the scene of action. But some positive good came out of it as well, both in Canada and in the United States.

The benefits conferred on the United States could not be given in apter words than those used by Gallatin, who, as the finance minister during four presidential terms, saw quite enough of the seamy side to sober his opinions, and who, as a prominent member of the war party, shared the disappointed hopes of his colleagues about the conquest of Canada. His opinion is, of course, that of a partisan. But it contains much truth, for all that

> The war has been productive of evil and of good; but I think the good preponderates. It has laid the foundations of permanent taxes and military establishments, which the Republicans [as the anti-Federalist Democrats were then called] had deemed unfavorable to the happiness and free institutions of the country. Under our former system we were becoming too selfish, too much attached exclusively to the acquisition of wealth, above all, too much confined in our political feelings to

> local and state objects. The war has renewed the national feelings and character which the Revolution had given, and which were daily lessening. The people are now more American. They feel and act more as a nation. And I hope that the permanency of the Union is thereby better secured.

Gallatin did not, of course, foresee that it would take a third conflict to finish what the Revolution had begun. But this sequel only strengthens his argument. For that Union which was born in the throes of the Revolution had to pass through its tumultuous youth in '1812' before reaching full manhood by means of the Civil War.

The benefits conferred on Canada were equally permanent and even greater. How Gallatin would have rejoiced to see in the United States any approach to such a financial triumph as that which was won by the Army Bills in Canada! No public measure was ever more successful at the time or more full of promise for the future. But mightier problems than even those of national finance were brought nearer to their desirable solution by this propitious war. It made Ontario

what Quebec had long since been—historic ground; thus bringing the older and newer provinces together with one exalting touch. It was also the last, as well as the most convincing, defeat of the three American invasions of Canada. The first had been led by Sir William Phips in 1690. This was long before the Revolution. The American Colonies were then still British and Canada still French. But the invasion itself was distinctively American, in men, ships, money, and design. It was undertaken without the consent or knowledge of the home authorities; and its success would probably have destroyed all chance of there being any British Canada to-day. The second American invasion had been that of Montgomery and Arnold in 1775, during the Revolution, when the very diverse elements of a new Canadian life first began to defend their common heritage against a common foe. The third invasion—the War of 1812—united all these elements once more, just when Canada stood most in need of mutual confidence between them. So there could not have been a better bond of union than the blood then shed so willingly by her different races in a single righteous cause.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ENOUGH books to fill a small library have been written about the 'sprawling and sporadic' War of 1812. Most of them deal with particular phases, localities, or events; and most of them are distinctly partisan. This is unfortunate, but not surprising. The war was waged over an immense area, by various forces, and with remarkably various results. The Americans were victorious on the Lakes and in all but one of the naval duels fought at sea. Yet their coast was completely sealed up by the Great Blockade in the last campaign. The balance of victory inclined towards the British side on land. Yet the annihilating American victories on the Lakes nullified most of the general military advantages gained by the British along the Canadian frontier. The fortunes of each campaign were followed with great interest on both sides of the line. But on the other side of the Atlantic the British home public had Napoleon to think of at their very doors; and so, for the most part, they regarded the war with the States as an untoward and regrettable annoyance, which diverted too much

force and attention from the life-and-death affairs of Europe.

All these peculiar influences are reflected in the different patriotic annals. Americans are voluble about the Lakes and the naval duels out at sea. But the completely effective British blockade of their coast-line is a too depressingly scientific factor in the problem to be welcomed by a general public which would not understand how Yankee ships could win so many duels while the British Navy won the war. Canadians are equally voluble about the battles on Canadian soil, where Americans had decidedly the worst of it. As a rule, Canadian writers have been quite as controversial as Americans, and not any readier to study their special subjects as parts of a greater whole. The British Isles have never had an interested public anxious to read about this remote, distasteful, and subsidiary war; and books about it there have consequently been very few.

The two chief authors who have appealed directly to the readers of the mother country are William James and Sir Charles Lucas. James was an industrious naval historian; but he was quite as anti-American as the earlier American writers were anti-British. Owing to this perverting bias his two books, the *Naval* and the *Military Occurrences of the late War between Great Britain and the United States*, are not to be relied upon. Their appendices, however, give a great many documents which are of much assistance in study-

ing the real history of the war. James wrote only a few years after the peace. Nearly a century later Sir Charles Lucas wrote *The Canadian War of 1812,* which is the work of a man whose life-long service in the Colonial Office and intimate acquaintance with Canadian history have both been turned to the best account. The two chief Canadian authors are Colonel Cruikshank and James Hannay. Colonel Cruikshank deserves the greatest credit for being a real pioneer with his *Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier.* Hannay's *History of the War of 1812* shows careful study of the Canadian aspects of the operations; but its generally sound arguments are weakened by its controversial tone.

The four chief American authors to reckon with are, Lossing, Upton, Roosevelt, and Mahan. They complement rather than correspond with the four British authors. The best known American work dealing with the military campaigns is Lossing's *Field-Book of the War of 1812.* It is an industrious compilation; but quite uncritical and most misleading. General Upton's *Military Policy of the United States* incidentally pricks all the absurd American militia bubbles with an incontrovertible array of hard and pointed facts. *The Naval War of 1812*, by Theodore Roosevelt, is an excellent sketch which shows a genuine wish to be fair to both sides. But the best naval work, and the most thorough work of any kind on either

side, is Admiral Mahan's *Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812.*

A good deal of original evidence on the American side is given in Brannan's *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States during the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812 to 1815.* The original British evidence about the campaigns in Canada is given in William Wood's *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812.* Students who wish to see the actual documents must go to Washington, London, and Ottawa. The Dominion Archives are of exceptional interest to all concerned.

The present work is based entirely on original evidence, both American and British.

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